

# Prepare the Way



A CHILDREN'S  
CHRISTMAS SERVICE

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Notes for Leaders

—Speaking Parts—

There are six sections with a total of 74 lines that can be assigned to three or more children, with one assigned as the “Foreman.” 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 15 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. Characters can be dressed in biblical costumes with the addition of either orange vests and/or hardhats, or anything else that identifies them as construction workers. In addition, a scroll of some sort will be needed.

—Children’s Songs—

Songs by children are indicated in the script and include “Angels We Have Heard on High,” “Once in Royal David’s City” and “Away in a Manger” (for youngest children). Additionally, children can be assigned verses for congregational hymns, if desired. All children with speaking and non-speaking parts should gather to sing in a designated area.

### –Centerpiece Display–

A construction zone set-up including various work tools (shovels, rakes, etc.) and a heart-shaped sign reading “Work Zone” serves as a centerpiece display. Additional signs (“Stop” sign, “Baby on Board” sign, “Construction Entrance” sign, “Y Intersection” sign, “Slow” sign, “Merge” sign and “Paradise Next Exit” sign) should be added to the set when indicated in the script. Road sign images are included. The following are some ideas of how to make and display the road signs:

- Images can be enlarged and printed in color, then taped or glued to poster board (and cut to the size and shape of image) with thin dowel rods or paint sticks attached to back for stability.
- Images can be projected onto poster board and adjusted to desired size, then traced and colored.
- If screens are available, images of each sign can be displayed on the screen in addition to the physical sign, in order to increase visibility for those in attendance.
- Original signs can be drawn based on the images included.
- Road signs can be hung on a line or tacked to a backdrop placed on the set.
- Road signs can be mounted on free-standing bases by attaching a long, thick dowel rod to the base of the sign, then placing each sign in a bucket of sand or other material to keep it upright (or, a wooden base can be constructed).

### –Nativity Tableau–

The script calls for costumed nativity characters including Mary, Joseph, angels, and shepherds. Instructions are included in the script as to when these characters should enter and exit. The nativity tableau is optional, but if using, a manger with a doll representing baby Jesus should be used. It can be set up on either side of the construction site centerpiece as space allows. An alternative to a live tableau would be to project images of Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels and baby Jesus on a screen as indicated in the script.

# Prepare the Way

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+ Order of Service +

Pre-service Music

As We Gather

*The children have worked hard preparing the way to bring the Good News of Jesus to all who attend this service. As you prepare to worship, consider what led you here today. How has God prepared your heart to receive him?*

Processional Hymn..... Prepare the Royal Highway

Prepare the royal highway; the King of kings is near!

Let ev'ry hill and valley a level road appear!

Then greet the King of Glory foretold in sacred story.

Hosanna to the Lord! For he fulfills God's Word.

So fling the gates wide open to greet your promised King!

Your King, yet ev'ry nation its tribute too should bring.

All lands, bow down before him! All nations, now adore him!

Hosanna to the Lord! For he fulfills God's Word.

Invocation

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

Call to Worship  
(Excerpts from Isaiah, Matthew and Luke)

**P** Prepare the way of the Lord!

**C** Make straight paths for him!

**P** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;:

**C** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.

**P** In the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord;

**C** Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Prayer of the Day

**P** Father in heaven, you sent your Son, Jesus to be our Savior and King. Help us prepare our hearts to receive this precious gift, and to prepare the way for others to worship him, our Prince of Peace. Amen.

A Meditation

**P** What have your Christmas preparations entailed this year? Probably a lot of work! There's shopping, cleaning, decorating, entertaining and lots of extra activities on our calendars. These preparations are all signs of the season. As exciting as they may be, frankly, Christmas preparations can be exhausting—so much so, that we may not have much energy left to do what God's Word tells us, "Prepare the way for the Lord!" The Advent season reminds us that we are to prepare for the coming of Jesus—to celebrate his birth and to look forward to the day he comes again to take us to be with him in heaven. But how do we really prepare for that? That sounds harder than trying to figure out what to buy for everyone on our Christmas lists! Don't worry. Jesus has already made all the necessary preparations for us. Today the children will show us how Jesus is preparing our hearts right now to receive him and honor him as our Savior and King. All we have to do is pay attention to the signs that he is truly Immanuel—"God-with-Us"—and respond to his presence, his love and his light in our lives. (*inviting congregation to put hands on their hearts*) Our hearts are God's work zone. Let's see how he leads us in his way.

Prepare Through Prayer

(Children dressed in Bible-time costumes with construction worker vests or hard hats gather around a heart-shaped road sign that reads "WORK ZONE.")

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. (Foreman) Okay, crew, we have a whole series of highways to build and it's going to take all hands on deck to get the job done.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Sounds great, boss. Let's start with a four-lane highway between Jerusalem and Bethany, where I live, so I can get to work on time.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. No, first we should build another road to Jaffa. It sure would help with the camel traffic on weekends when people head for the beach.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. (*Foreman*) Hold on, crew. Those are not the roads we've been assigned to build. The plan is to build roads that pave the way for royalty.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Royalty? Well why didn't you say so in the first place?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I'm on it, boss. I'll order the gold for the pavement right away.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. (*picking up a shovel*) Come on, everybody, let's prepare this ground.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Wait a minute. We can't prepare ground until we know where to build. (*to Foreman*) What exactly are our orders, boss?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. (*Foreman*) I thought you'd never ask. Our orders come straight for the top. (*point and look up*)

**R** In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God (Isaiah 40:3).

- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. (*Foreman*) Put that gold order on hold too. Our job is to prepare the way for the Lord God to come to us.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. God is coming to us? Whoa! This really is big. Gold isn't good enough. We need platinum!  
                   (*Foreman places "STOP" sign next to "Work Zone" sign.*)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. (*Foreman*) Stop! In order to prepare the way for the Lord, we first need to stop, look and listen.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. (*pointing to stop sign*) Stop, look and listen. I had to learn that before I could get my license to drive a camel. But what does that have to do with preparing the way for the Lord?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I know! It means, we have to pray. That is, before we make plans or do anything, we have to (*fold hands*) stop and ask God for direction; (*pick up scroll and unroll it*) look for the signs he gives us in his Word; (*fold hands again*) and listen to what he tells us to do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Could we be building a highway for the Savior? God's Word tells us he will send him to us. People have been waiting and praying a long time for him to come.

**R** Restore us, O God. Let your face shine, that we may be saved! (Psalm 80:3).

- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. (*Foreman*) God heard our prayers. The prophet Isaiah told us about the day the answer would come.

**R** Arise! Shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen

upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will rise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you (Isaiah 60:1-2).

Ⓜ And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Wow. I want to be prepared for the Prince of Peace to come! (*point to stop sign*) Let's "stop" right now and pray.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. (*fold hands and look up*) Lord, help us prepare the way for you to come to us today. Help us look to your Word for the signs that point to our Savior. Help us listen to you, so our hearts are ready to receive him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Amen! Now, let's get to work. We have a royal highway to build. God is sending the Savior and he will be our Lord and King!
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. I guess we won't need to put up street lights. The Savior will light the way for us.

Song by Congregation ..... The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns

The King shall come when morning dawns  
And light triumphant breaks  
When beauty gilds the eastern hills,  
And life to joy awakes.

Not as of old, a little child  
To bear, and fight, and die,  
But crowned with glory like the sun,  
That lights the morning sky.

The King shall come when morning dawns,  
And light and beauty brings:  
Hail, Christ the Lord! Thy people pray,  
Come quickly, King of kings.

Prepare a Place

- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. (*Foreman*) Okay, crew. The first road we have to build is one that goes from Nazareth to Bethlehem.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. What? Why would God send the Savior on a road from some small town in the middle of nowhere to a city like Bethlehem? It's not the best of neighborhoods, you know.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. Definitely not fit for a king!
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. But don't you remember what God said about Bethlehem through the prophet Micah?