

Have You Heard the Word?

A CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS SERVICE



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Notes for Leaders

Speaking Parts

There are six sections with a total of 72 lines that can be assigned to four or more children. There are also 13 Scripture readings (indicated by an **R** in the script) that 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. Main character roles include two News Anchors, an Investigative Reporter (Sawyer Snoop), a Cub Reporter, a Census Recorder, an Innkeeper, a Citizen, a Shepherd, a Wise Man and Simeon. Character assignments are flexible. For example, if there are not enough children to play all roles, multiple character parts can be assigned to a child. All characters should be dressed in biblical era costumes. Note: Names of anchors and certain other characters are not specified; however, where “ ____ ” is noted in the script, any name can be inserted.

Children's Songs

Songs by children are indicated in the script and include “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” “Go Tell It on the Mountain” 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.

Sets and Centerpiece Display

The following separate sets are needed and can be staged according to the space available.

1) A TV News Room: a desk with two chairs for news anchors. Either as a backdrop or posted on front of the desk should be the words “Bethlehem News Network” or “BNN.”

2) Interview Area: This is where “Sawyer Snoop” will interview various characters throughout the script. It should be located somewhere offside of news room set. A real or toy microphone can be used for interviewing.

3) Nativity Scene (optional): If using a nativity tableau, the manger scene should be located off to the side or behind the news room set, in a different location than the interview area.

4) Centerpiece Display: A large piece of foam core or poster board (can be on an easel or posted on a wall that is easily visible to congregation) with the words “Bethlehem News Network” or “BNN” posted on the top. Throughout the script as indicated, the Cub Reporter will post the following screenshots on the board:

- a. Something Big Coming to Bethlehem
- b. New King Born In a Barn
- c. UFO Sighting Outside of Bethlehem
- d. Outcasts Share the Inside Scoop
- e. Celestial Sign Draws Visitors From the East
- f. Baby Jesus Is the Word Made Flesh

The centerpiece should be set up in a prominent location. Breaking News screenshots are included and can be printed out and fastened in different places on a large piece of foam core or poster board, if desired. Depending on the construction of the Breaking News foam core or poster board, use tape, push pins or other means to fasten the screenshots to the board. The last screenshot, “Baby Jesus Is the Word Made Flesh,” should be placed in the center of the board.

Nativity Tableau

The script calls for costumed nativity characters, including Mary, Joseph, angels, shepherds and wise men. Instructions are included in the script as to when these characters should enter and exit. The nativity tableau is optional. An alternative to a live tableau would be to project images of characters on a screen where indicated in the script. Another option would be to have Sunday School teachers or other adults play these parts. If none of these options is feasible, the tableau can be eliminated.

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Order of Service

Pre-Service Music

As We Gather

As you prepare for worship, pray that the Holy Spirit would help you hear the Good News of Jesus' birth afresh. Listen for new insights into God's Word that inspire you to spread the Word about Jesus, our King and Savior.

Processional Hymn O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;

Come and behold him born the king of angels;

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

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Complete Script

Pre-Service Music

As We Gather

As you prepare for worship, pray that the Holy Spirit would help you hear the Good News of Jesus' birth afresh. Listen for new insights into God's Word that inspire you to spread the Word about Jesus, our King and Savior.

Processional Hymn O Come, All Ye Faithful

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!

O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;

Come and behold him born the king of angels;

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Highest, most holy, Light of Light eternal.

Born of a virgin a mortal he comes;

Son of the Father now in flesh appearing!

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,

O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Invocation and Call to Worship (with selections from Isaiah 40 and John 1)

L In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

C **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through him.**

L And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

C **The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.**

L In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

C **We have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

Prayer of the Day

L Lord Jesus, bless the children who bring the good news in your Word that proclaims you as our Savior. Draw us near to you, the “Word made Flesh,” so we may have joy as we celebrate your birth and worship you, our Lord and King. Amen.

A Meditation

Ⓛ “Breaking news.” Those words get our attention when we hear them on the TV or radio, or when we get an alert on our phones. We immediately want to know what’s going on. Our reaction to breaking news may be one of celebration, or it may invoke fear, sadness, concern or even debate. Today, the children will share with us breaking news—not from today’s headlines, but from the Word of God. It’s the story of the birth of Jesus—the Word Made Flesh. It is news that has broken out over and over again throughout the Bible. It wasn’t angels who first broke the news of Jesus, nor the shepherds who spread the word around Bethlehem. From the creation account to the messages of the prophets, all of God’s Word proclaims a Savior who has the final word on sin, death and Satan, restoring our relationship with God. It’s an age-old story just as fresh today as it ever was because the Good News of Jesus breaks through our darkness every day. For some, this news may cause fear, concern or debate. Some won’t believe it at all. But for those who believe, it is our hope, peace, joy and our life! Have you heard the Word? It is Jesus. Let us worship him today.

Breaking News: Something Big Coming to Bethlehem

(News Anchors sit behind desk in front of “Bethlehem News Network” (or BNN) backdrop. Sawyer Snoop and Census Recorder enter interview area off to the side of the news set near the display board centerpiece.)

Ⓜ Have you hear the word? 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)

- ___ 1. Welcome to today’s edition of “Have You Heard the Word?” on BNN—Bethlehem News Network.
- ___ 2. Topping our headlines today is breaking news about the worldwide census ordered by governor Quirinius.
- ___ 3. Joining us today is BNN’s own investigative reporter, Sawyer Snoop, with the latest word on what this census means for Bethlehem.
- ___ 4. (Snoop) Thanks, _____. I’m here today with the chief census recorder in

Bethlehem. (To Recorder) Can you tell viewers what you know?

- ___ 5. (Recorder) Well, Sawyer, it's been busy, busy, busy! People from all over the region are coming to register. The lines are long, and the inns are filling up fast.
- ___ 6. (Snoop) Some believe that something much bigger is about to happen. We know God's Word says something big is coming to Bethlehem. Could this be the time?
- ___ 7. (Recorder) Maybe. But with so many people coming to register, I don't know if Bethlehem can handle anything bigger. (Pointing to back) Oh look, here comes another couple and they're about to have a baby! (Throwing arms up) Where will we put them? (Exit scene.)

(Mary and Joseph enter from back, then sit near interview area.)

- ___ 8. (Snoop) BNN will be on alert to bring you word of the latest developments. Back to you, _____. (Exit scene.)
- ___ 9. Thank you, Sawyer. Following up on what God's Word says about a big event in Bethlehem, we bring you this prophecy from Micah.
- ___ 10. The prophet Micah said God would send a great ruler to save his people and that he would be born right here in Bethlehem.

Ⓜ Have you heard the word? 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. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth...and he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord...and he shall be their peace. (Micah 5:2-5)

- ___ 11. God's people sure could use a king like this! Could the census open the doors of Bethlehem for his arrival? Will Bethlehem be ready?
- ___ 12. BNN searched the Scriptures for more clues and learned that the king will come from the line of Jesse, who was King David's father.

Ⓜ Have you heard the word? There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. (Isaiah 11:1-3)

- ___ 13. This just in. We have learned the couple expecting the baby are Joseph and Mary from Nazareth. It is confirmed they are here to register for the census because they are from the line of King David.

___ 14. Could Mary and Joseph be the parents of the promised King or just ordinary people among many registering in the census?

___ 15. BNN is your trusted news source to discover the truth and bring it to you live. Stay tuned for the latest developments.

(Cub Reporter goes to Breaking News board with first screenshot.)

___ 16. (Cub Reporter) Have you heard the word? Micah predicts Something Big Coming to Bethlehem! (Place screenshot on Breaking News board.)

Song by the 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.

Breaking News: New King Born in a Barn

(Mary and Joseph walk to manger scene. Innkeeper and Snoop enter.)

Ⓜ Have you heard the word? 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 cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. (Luke 2:6-7)

___ 17. Welcome to today's edition of "Have you Heard the Word?" on BNN—Bethlehem News Network.