

GOD'S GREAT GIFT

By Shirley Bostrom

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GOD'S GREAT GIFT

This service was first performed at the author's church, Christ Lutheran Church, Menomonie, WI, on Dec. 17, 1989.

Slides, music, and narration blend together to form this beautiful Christmas program that you can make uniquely yours.

God's Great Gift is seen through three program parts, the Creation story, the Christmas story, and your own story. By adding your own slides, both collected from members of your congregation and created with your children as the actors, you personalize the program to make it more meaningful. Sunday school classes can even add their own statement of thanksgiving. Adults and children alike can celebrate together in this service of worship because much of the production is done ahead of time, long before the "Christmas rush" begins.

God's Great Gift is well suited for a large or small congregation, since children can wear costumes and be photographed in one or more different roles. All children should be included in the slides and in the music. The program concludes with a congregational response of thankfulness.

Consult Production Notes at end of playbook for complete details including a list of music and slides.

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ORDER OF SERVICE

Prelude

Welcome and Prayer

Processional: "O Come, All Ye Faithful" - Congregation

God's Great Gift of Creation

Slides and litany

Song: "Wonder Song" - Grades 1-3

Special Child Announcer

God's Great Gift of a Baby

Narration and slides

Song: "Here We Go Up to Bethlehem" Age 3 - Kindergarten

"Joseph and Mary" (Finger play) Age 3 - Kindergarten

Song: "In a Little Stable" - Age 3 - Kindergarten:

Hymn: "Away in a Manger" - Congregation

Song: "Little Gray Donkey" - Solo

Narration and slides

Song: "Baby of Bethlehem" - Choir

Song: "Do You Hear What I Hear" - Congregation

Narration and slides

Song: "The Friendly Beasts" - Grades 1-3

Song: "Once Upon a Starry Night" - Grades 4-6

Narration and slides

Song: "Sing Noel" - Grades 4-6

We Share Our Gifts

Offering - Piano solo

Response: "We Give Thee but Thine Own" - Congregation

Sunday School Response to God's Great Gift

Narration and slides

Individual class pictures and responses

Our Church's Response to God's Great Gift

Narration and slides

Our Personal Response to God's Great Gift

Narration and slides

Closing prayer

Recessional hymn: "Joy to the World" - Congregation

Playing Time: Approximately an hour.

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PRELUDE: Organist plays a medley of Christmas music.

WELCOME AND PRAYER: By pastor or other adult leader.

PROCESSIONAL: "O Come, All Ye Faithful."
(*Congregation sings as CHILDREN enter and sit in front pews reserved for them. The overhead LIGHTS go off and the projector flashes on SCREEN. The NARRATOR takes his/her place at a podium with small reading light or flashlight.*)

GOD'S GREAT GIFT OF CREATION (A Litany based on Genesis 1:1-27)

NARRATOR: In the beginning God made the world. (*Slide #1*) But the world was not beautiful at first, like it is now. It was dark, and there was no light. But then God created the light of day. (*#2*) The darkness He called night. (*#3*)

CHILDREN: We give thanks to God for His great gifts.

NARRATOR: God separated the waters (*#4*) and created the heavens (*#5*) and the skies. (*#6. Based on Genesis 1:6-8*)

CHILDREN: We give thanks to God for His great gifts.

NARRATOR: God gathered the water together in one place (*#7*) and called it seas (*#8*) and the dry ground he called earth. (*#9. Based on Genesis 1:9-10*)

CHILDREN: We give thanks to God for His great gifts.

NARRATOR: God made growing things of every kind. (*#10, 11, 12, 13, 14. Based on Genesis 1:11-13*)

CHILDREN: We give thanks to God for His great gifts.

NARRATOR: God made the moon (*#15*) and sun (*#16*) and stars. (*#17. Based on Genesis 1:14-19*)

CHILDREN: We give thanks to God for His great gifts.

NARRATOR: God made living creatures, birds (*#18*), fish (*#19*), and animals. (*#20, 21. Based on Genesis 1:20-25.*)

CHILDREN: We give thanks to God for His great gifts.

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NARRATOR: But there were no people in the world to enjoy all the things God had made. (#22) So God made a man and a woman to live together in the beautiful garden of Eden. (#23. *Based on Genesis 1:27*)

CHILDREN: We give thanks to God for His great gifts. (*SCREEN off and LIGHTS on.*)

SONG: "Wonder Song." Grades 1-3.

NARRATOR: But Adam and Eve disobeyed God, and were sent out of the garden. Sin came into the world. But God still loved His people and He promised them yet another gift ... the gift of his Son. The Bible tells about this promise in the book of Isaiah: "For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." (*Isaiah 9:6*) And so God's people waited for their Savior.

CHILD ANNOUNCER: (*One CHILD comes forward to read.*) We would like to tell you what happened next. In our Sunday School classes, we have all been learning the story of how God sent us the gift of his son Jesus at Christmas time. Some of us acted out the story on film, some of us wrote things we will read, and all of us learned songs which we will sing for you. Here is our story. (*SCREEN on and LIGHTS off.*)

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GOD'S GREAT GIFT OF A BABY (Based on Luke 1)

CHILD NARRATOR: One day God sent an angel to a young woman named Mary. (#24) "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you will have a baby." (Luke 1:30) Now Mary was to be married soon to a man named Joseph. (#25) They were very happy! (#26) It happened that at that time everyone had to go to Bethlehem to pay taxes and be counted. Mary and Joseph had to go, too. (#27) It was a long way. (#28. *SCREEN off and LIGHTS on. CHILDREN take places in front and sing. After song they perform finger play.*)

SONG: "Here We Go Up to Bethlehem." Age 3-K

FINGER PLAY: "Joseph and Mary." **

This is Joseph and this is Mary. (*Point two fingers on each hand down; make walking motion.*)

See how they look so very weary. (*Hang head down and brush hand across brow.*)

Knock, knock, knock, at the innkeeper's door. (*Knock in the air with right hand.*)

He shakes his head, no room for more. (*Shake head from side to side.*)

Go to the stable where the animals stay. (*Point off in direction of stable.*)

You will find a place to sleep in the hay. (*Tilt head to side and rest on hands held together.*)

Quietly come to the manger and see. (*Place forefinger in front of mouth.*)

The baby Jesus God sent for you and me. (*Form cradle with arms and rock side to side, or point to manger scene.*)

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