

# BREAKFAST IN BETHLEHEM

*by Sandra L. Mack  
& Alene H. Betts*



CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

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# **Breakfast in Bethlehem**

A community outreach  
Christmas program

by Sandra L. Mack with Alene H. Betts

## *SCHEDULE OF EVENTS*

Although times are suggested for this breakfast program, they are merely a guideline to assist in your planning. Actual times may vary.

9:00 a.m. — Guests arrive and are greeted by Bethlehem townspeople.

- Check in at the registration table, pick up nametags, hang up coats.
- Pose for photo against biblical backdrop.

9:15 a.m. — Seating at the tables begins.

9:30 a.m. — Breakfast

- Tables preset with fruit cup and assorted beverages.
- When tables are full, pastor prays for the meal. Pancakes and sausage served and beverages refilled.
- Children may color at the table.

10:00 a.m. — Drama

10:15 a.m. — Meet and greet the actors and take pictures.

- Prior to departure, all guests receive an “I Went to Breakfast in Bethlehem” sticker.
- Guests also receive the photo that was taken when they arrived as a take-home memento.

10:30 a.m. — Approximate departure time.

***CAST OF CHARACTERS***

**Mary**

**Joseph**

**Shepherd 1**

**Shepherd 2**

**Wise Man 1**

**Wise Man 2**

**Wise Man 3**

**Child**

(To ask a question from the audience)

***SUPPORT PERSONNEL***

**Kitchen Helpers:** Organizers and cooks to plan the menu and prepare the meal.

**Servers:** Bring food to the tables, attend to the guests' needs, and clear the dishes after the guests have eaten. They will be dressed in biblical costumes since they double as Bethlehem townspeople.

**Soloist(s):** To sing the carols noted in the script.

## *PRODUCTION NOTES*

The world offers breakfast with Santa, Santa at schools, bedtime stories with Santa, and Christmas parties complete with a visit from St. Nick, so why shouldn't the church offer the true story of Christmas, presented in a fun and informative atmosphere? Designed for families and especially children ages 2-12, your guests will take a step back in time to visit the town of Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph will host your visit, introducing you to the shepherds and wise men. Children and their parents enjoy breakfast, songs, and activities, which will keep December/Advent focused on the true meaning of the season: the birth of Jesus Christ. From the time your guests enter the church, they will be greeted, registered, escorted, and served by a "Bethlehem Townsperson," so they will feel as though they stepped through the pages of the Bible into the time of Jesus' birth. After enjoying breakfast, hosts Mary and Joseph share the Christmas story. Families, young adults, and teens of your church may serve as the actors, soloists, servers, and helpers while dressed as biblical characters.

**Invitations:** In the middle of November, mail a 5 x 7 postcard invitation to households in your community. See sample below:

You are invited to

## Breakfast in Bethlehem

Bring your family to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas!

\*Enjoy a hot breakfast

\*Meet biblical characters from the first Christmas

\*Music, drama, and children's activities featured!

Date: Saturday, December \_\_\_\_

Time: 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Place: Your church name and address here.

Cost: Children 2 and under, free; children 3-12, \$2.00; adults, \$4.00

Tickets may be purchased by mail or at the church office.

All children must be accompanied by an adult.

RSVP: By December \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

(contact name with church telephone and e-mail address)

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**Cost:** This may be handled several different ways. For example, \$2.00 per child and \$4.00 per adult. (Or suggest a cost per family.) Another option could be a contribution of canned goods to a local shelter or food bank, or a Christmas toy to an organization. Reservations are necessary, and all children must be accompanied by an adult. Tickets should be sold ahead of time. If there is an overwhelming response, a second breakfast may be scheduled for another day.

**Props and Supplies:** For the drama — baby doll, shepherds' crooks, gifts for the wise men (bottles, carved wooden boxes, etc.), manger.

Other items needed — invitations, nametags, placemats with Bethlehem scene and crayons at tables, song sheets (or put the lyrics on the reverse side of the placemats), plates, cups, napkins, plastic utensils, serving trays and carts, fold-over presentation cards for photographs with same artwork as invitations, one or two digital cameras with photo printer, take-home stickers saying "I Went to Breakfast in Bethlehem," thus promoting interest in the event for future years. Depending upon the budget, ornaments or buttons bearing the same message may be created instead.

**Costumes:** All townspeople, workers, greeters, servers, and actors will be dressed in biblical costumes — simple robes with draped headpieces and sandals. The only people who will not be dressed in costume will be those cooking in the kitchen.

**Facility, Set, Decorations, and Scenery:** You will need a facility of significant size with a working kitchen, an adjacent area with tables and chairs, a sound system with microphones, and a piano or recorded musical background.

Parts of the lobby and the fellowship hall (or the area that will be used for serving breakfast and the program) will be decorated like the town of Bethlehem, the shepherds' field, and the stable.

The lobby may hold one or more backdrops with pictures of the stable, camels and the three wise men, and/or shepherds and sheep. The scenes might include cutout faces of the shepherds, wise men, etc., in several sizes, short to tall, so that the entire family may have a part in the picture. If you prefer, guests may stand in front of backdrop areas for pictures with some of the costumed biblical characters. (The pictures will be developed during the program and made available for pickup when the guests depart.)

The breakfast and program area will be decorated like a Bethlehem home of the time period. Include a table where Mary can be preparing food. Use various baskets, wooden bowls, pottery, perhaps a stool or bench. Use fresh or artificial foods of the time period to decorate as well. Such foods could include unleavened bread, grapes, apples, melons, pomegranates, nuts, gourds, onions, ears of corn, beans, grain, lentils, and leeks.

The table centerpieces feature a small sign on cardstock with the word "Bethlehem" printed on it. The end of the sign should be cut in a point,

to resemble an arrow. Glue the sign to a sturdy twig and set the twig in a base of clay, florist's foam, etc. Surround the base with aquarium pebbles. The overall effect suggests being "on the road to Bethlehem."

**Welcome and Registration:** As guests enter the lobby, they will be greeted by Bethlehem Townspeople dressed in biblical costumes. Actors should always stay in character. Guests will check in at the registration table and pick up a nametag. They will then be directed to hang up their coats.

After hanging up their coats, they will be directed to the photo area. This is a Bible scene set up in the lobby area where a picture of each family will be taken. After having their picture taken, guests will be directed to the fellowship hall, where they will be seated for breakfast.

### **Breakfast:**

Menu: Fruit cup

Pancakes with butter and syrup

Link sausages

Juice (Small glasses)

Milk (Individual cartons of white and chocolate)

Coffee or tea

Tables are preset with centerpieces and plates, napkins, plastic utensils, a small cup of juice, and a fruit cup at each place setting. Syrup and butter are also on the tables. You may also wish to include Christmas-themed coloring pages or a placemat to color. Place a basket of crayons on the table for your young artists. High chairs and booster seats should also be made available for very young children.

A Townsperson will escort guests to their table. Start seating guests at the front of the room. Fill each table and work toward the back. The tables will be preset with individual fruit cups and juice. As guests are seated, they may begin eating their fruit cup. When the table is full and the pastor prays for the meal, servers may bring the hot food (pancakes and sausage) to the table. The food may be served family style. Another server brings a beverage cart to the table with white and chocolate milk, juice, and coffee and tea.

**Music:** Four songs are suggested, but you may insert your own selections if they fit. Choose newer songs or traditional carols or a mix — whatever fits your audience and the mood you are trying to convey. A nice touch is to have Christmas music playing in the background (except during the drama).

**Drama:** When everyone has been served, the entertainment portion of the program may begin.



1       (MARY and JOSEPH enter the fellowship hall and make their  
2       way to the front of the room, saying hello to tables along the  
3       way.)

4   **JOSEPH:** Good morning. Welcome to Bethlehem! How's  
5       everyone this morning? (*Wait for response.*) Great! Did  
6       you enjoy your breakfast? (*Wait for response.*) Are you  
7       having a good time? (*Wait for response.*) Wonderful! Well,  
8       let me introduce myself. My name is Joseph, and this is  
9       my wife, Mary.

10   **MARY:** Good morning, everyone. Welcome to Bethlehem!  
11       We're so happy you came to visit. Did you have a nice  
12       trip to Bethlehem today? (*Wait for response.*) Tell me, how  
13       did you get here? (*Wait for response.*) A car! An SUV! I've  
14       never heard about such things. A van? Is that anything  
15       like a donkey? (*Wait for response.*) Well, Joseph and I  
16       would like to tell you about a trip we made to  
17       Bethlehem many, many years ago.

18   **JOSEPH:** That's right. It *was* a long time ago. Mary and I  
19       were engaged to be married, and we lived in a town  
20       called Nazareth.

21   **MARY:** One night while I was praying at my bedside, an  
22       angel came down from heaven to visit me. (*Fearful*) I was  
23       so frightened! The angel's name was Gabriel. He was  
24       radiant and beautiful! His robe was brilliant — it just  
25       glowed. He said, "Fear not, Mary, for God has favored  
26       you." (*Humbly*) Oh, I couldn't believe it — he knew my  
27       name! (*Surprised*) "You will bear a son and call him  
28       Jesus. He will be great, and his kingdom will never  
29       end."

30   **JOSEPH:** (*Stepping to the front*) That's right, and then the  
31       angel Gabriel visited me too. I was asleep, and he woke  
32       me up. The room was filled with light. It was awesome!  
33       He said, "Joseph, I bring good news. Mary, your  
34       betrothed, will have a son, and he is the Son of God."  
35       (*Awestruck*) Wow! Then he told me to care for Mary and  
36       the baby. It was hard to believe at first, but I love God,  
37       so I decided to do whatever God asked me to.

38   **MARY:** Joseph and I were married soon after that. Then we

1 started getting ready for Jesus' birth. Joseph is a  
2 carpenter, so he made a cradle for Jesus.

3 JOSEPH: And Mary sewed clothes and blankets for the  
4 baby. Soon everything was ready for the birth ... but  
5 Jesus was not to be born at home in Nazareth. The  
6 mighty Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus, ordered that  
7 everyone should return to their hometowns in order to  
8 pay their taxes. My family came from Bethlehem. So,  
9 although it was winter and the baby was nearly due,  
10 Mary and I had to go to Bethlehem to pay our taxes.  
11 Bethlehem is about a seventy-mile trip from Nazareth.  
12 It was a long and tiring journey. Some days were rainy  
13 and windy, and the nights were cold.

14 MARY: *(Interrupting)* Did he mention I had to ride a donkey?

15 JOSEPH: Sorry, I forgot that! *(Putting his arm around MARY)*  
16 It was a hard trip, traveling by donkey and sleeping on  
17 the ground at night, but you were very brave. After  
18 several days, we finally reached Bethlehem.

19 MARY: In Bethlehem, the streets were crowded. Many  
20 people had also come to pay their taxes. *(Shaking her*  
21 *head)* So many travelers, and all the inns were full.  
22 *(Shrugging her shoulders)* Joseph knocked on one door,  
23 and then another and another and another. But the  
24 answer was always the same: "No room!"

25 "No room!"

26 "No room at the inn!"

27 At last a kind innkeeper took pity on us, and he  
28 showed us to his stable. "You can sleep here," he said.

29 JOSEPH: It wasn't the Holiday Inn, but we were very  
30 grateful to have a place to stay. It was warm and we had  
31 fresh hay to make a bed, so we lay down to rest for the  
32 night. *(MARY and JOSEPH step back. The lights dim and a*  
33 *SOLOIST begins singing.)*

34

35 SONG: "O Little Town of Bethlehem," verse one.

36

37 SOLOIST: *(Singing)* O little town of Bethlehem,  
38 How still we see thee lie!

1 Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
 2 The silent stars go by;  
 3 Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
 4 The everlasting Light;  
 5 The hopes and fears of all the years  
 6 Are met in thee tonight. (*SOLOIST exits. As the lights come*  
 7 *up, MARY and JOSEPH come to the front once again. MARY*  
 8 *is holding a baby in her arms.*)

9 **JOSEPH:** During the night, the baby was born.

10 **MARY:** (*Holding a baby in her arms and acting like a proud*  
 11 *mother*) What a beautiful baby! Joseph filled the manger  
 12 with straw to make a crib for baby Jesus. Then we  
 13 wrapped him in swaddling clothes.

14 **CHILD:** (*Prearrange for someone in the audience to ask the*  
 15 *following question*) What are swaddling clothes?

16 **MARY:** (*Repeating the question*) What are swaddling clothes?  
 17 Why, baby clothes, of course! As I lay baby Jesus in the  
 18 manger, I will sing him a lullaby. Will you join me in  
 19 singing "Away in a Manger"? The words are printed on  
 20 your placemat. (*Or program or song sheet.*)

21  
 22 **SONG:** "Away in a Manger"

23  
 24 Away in a manger,  
 25 No crib for a bed,  
 26 The little Lord Jesus  
 27 Laid down his sweet head.

28  
 29 The stars in the sky  
 30 Looked down where he lay,  
 31 The little Lord Jesus,  
 32 Asleep on the hay.

33  
 34 The cattle are lowing,  
 35 The poor Baby wakes,  
 36 But little Lord Jesus,  
 37 No crying he makes.

38



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