

BUILDING THE NATIVITY

by Gail Gaymer Martin



CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

Copyright Notice

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Christian Publishers. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Christian Publishers. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Christian Publishers. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Christian Publishers.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice: ***Produced by special arrangement with Christian Publishers.***

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Christian Publishers.

Building the Nativity

Mini programs for Advent

by Gail Gaymer Martin

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. Advent I**
- 2. Advent II**
- 3. Advent III**
- 4. Advent IV**
- 5. Christmas**

PREFACE

As children anxiously await Christmas, they are barraged by television commercials, newspaper ads, and store displays drawing their focus from the true meaning of Christmas. Written as an alternative to or in conjunction with the traditional Advent candle lighting, this program features the participation of children.

The presentation may also take the place of the children's sermonette or be used as a Sunday school opening. Wherever it is presented, the four Advent programs direct the youngsters' attention to Christ's birth and the historical preparation from the perspective of Isaiah, John the Baptist, the angel Gabriel, the heavenly host, and the magi. The readings and narration help to create the excitement of Christmas and allow full participation by the children as they set up the Nativity scene and sing the Advent song.

The fifth presentation, focusing on the appearance of the Christ child, may be used during a Christmas worship service or as the opening to the children's Christmas program.

All scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION ©. NIV©. Copyright ® 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

CAST OF PARTICIPANTS

READERS 1 and 2

(You may designate a new Reader 1 and 2 each Sunday. More readers may be added if you wish.)

SINGERS

(Any number of children may sing.)

FIVE CHILDREN

(One per week, to place the Nativity figurines.)

PRODUCTION NOTES

A Nativity scene is often displayed in homes and churches to depict the wondrous event at Christmas. This program uses the crèche as the focal point for children to witness the Christmas story in small scenes during each week of Advent. A large Nativity scene is most effective and is best viewed on a stand in front of the worship space or Sunday school area. Before the first presentation, the stable and farm animals, such as cows and oxen, should be placed in the scene. The sheep will be placed with the shepherd and the camels with the kings. Beginning with the first Sunday of Advent, each week the children will hear a brief portion of the Christmas story and will add the appropriate pieces to the Nativity scene. The Christ child will be the last piece to be added during a Christmas program or service.

Selected children participate by reading the narration or placing the Nativity scene pieces in the stable. The other children may surround the crèche to witness the activity and sing a verse of "Song of Advent." Two readers are designated for each of the programs, but to involve more children, each part may have a different reader. During the weeks of Advent, a different Sunday school class might be the presenters. Children could be selected as a reward for perfect attendance, at random, or by any method agreed upon by the teachers and/or pastor.

"Song of Advent" may be sung by the children or printed in a church bulletin for participation by the congregation. The song includes original words written by the author and is sung to a familiar tune, which is in the public domain.

Words for “Song of Advent”

(Tune: “Good Christian Men [or Friends] Rejoice”)

First Sunday of Advent

Verse 1

The house of David traveled then,
 From Nazareth to Bethlehem,
 To register by law’s decree.
 So Joseph came with sweet Mary
 And found no place to rest their head.
 A stable’s straw became their bed.
 God’s true gift for man
 Soon will come from heaven.

Second Sunday of Advent

Verse 2

Above the hills of Bethlehem,
 A heavenly angel sang a hymn,
 Peace and joy to all the earth,
 Announcing Jesus’ lowly birth.
 Shepherds stood in awe and fear
 When God’s own messenger appeared.
 In a manger see,
 Christ will set you free.

Third Sunday of Advent

Verse 3

The shepherds knelt and cringed with fear
 When heavenly angels hovered near,
 Bringing news of wondrous joy,
 In Bethlehem is born a boy,
 Child of man and God is born
 In a stable so forlorn.
 Shepherds rise and go,
 Bethlehem’s star aglow.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Verse 4

A heavenly star above the earth,
 Announced to all the wondrous birth.
 From the East the Magi came,
 Bearing gifts to give the King.
 Found him in a manger stall,
 Jesus came to save us all.
 Praise the Lord and sing,
 Worship Christ the King.

Christmas

Verse 5

In Bethlehem God's Son is given,
 A gift to man come down from heaven.
 There a manger for his bed,
 No kingly crown upon his head.
 He was born to save us all,
 And lead us to God's heavenly hall.
 Join to sing God's praise.
 Christ is born today!

Advent I

(READERS 1 and 2 enter and stand at the podium.)

READER 1: God sent a messenger, a son born to Elizabeth, to prepare for the coming of the Christ child. He was named John as God had commanded. And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace (Luke 1:76-79).

READER 2: Today is the first Sunday in Advent, and just as John prepared the way for Jesus' birth, Christians also get ready for Christ's coming in many ways. For our preparation, we will get ready using a Nativity scene as we listen to verses from the Christmas story.

READER 1: In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child (Luke 2:1-5).

READER 2: Because the city was so crowded with people coming to Bethlehem to register, Mary and Joseph could find no place to stay. An innkeeper let them rest in his stable where he kept his animals. *(CHILDREN proceed to the Nativity scene and place Mary, Joseph, and animals in the stable, then all the CHILDREN gather to sing*

2

3

4

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

31

32

33

34

35

terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests” (Luke 2:8-14).

READER 2: As you heard, besides John the Baptist, God also sent angels as messengers. The angel Gabriel spoke to Joseph and Mary, and an angel spoke to the shepherds watching their flocks in the fields around Bethlehem. Angels remind us of God’s constant care for his children. (*CHILDREN proceed to the Nativity scene and place an angel over the stable, then all of the CHILDREN gather to sing the second verse of the “Song of Advent.”*)

Song of Advent

Verse 2

(Sung to the tune of “Good Christian Men [or Friends] Rejoice”)

CHILDREN: (*Singing*) Above the hills of Bethlehem,
A heavenly angel sang a hymn,
Peace and joy to all the earth,
Announcing Jesus’ lowly birth.
Shepherds stood in awe and fear
When God’s own messenger appeared.
In a manger see,
Christ will set you free.

Advent III

(*READERS 1 and 2 enter and stand at the podium.*)

READER 1: The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary,

1 you have found favor with God. You will be with child
 2 and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the
 3 name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son
 4 of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne
 5 of his father David, and he will reign over the house of
 6 Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end” (Luke 1:30-
 7 33).

8 **READER 2:** An angel came to Joseph and Mary to
 9 announce Jesus’ birth. God’s heavenly host was sent to
 10 prepare the whole world for Christ’s coming. But the
 11 night Jesus was born, the message was given first to
 12 the shepherds who tended the flocks of sheep in the
 13 hills around Bethlehem. As we celebrate the third
 14 Sunday of Advent, imagine on that special night the
 15 sky bursting with a heavenly light and a host of angels
 16 praising God.

17 **READER 1:** “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth
 18 peace to men ...” When the angels had left them and
 19 gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another,
 20 “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has
 21 happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they
 22 hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby,
 23 who was lying in the manger (Luke 2:14-16).

24 **READER 2:** Today as we prepare for Christ’s birth, we
 25 remember the angels who appeared to the shepherds
 26 and brought good news of great joy to all the world.
 27 Remember that God did not send his angel first to
 28 kings and rich men, but the Lord sent the angel to the
 29 hard-working shepherds who spent their days and
 30 nights in the fields, watching the sheep. This reminds
 31 us that Jesus was not born in a palace wrapped in silk
 32 and fur, but he was born in a stable and wrapped in
 33 rags, and his bed was the animals’ food trough. As we
 34 prepare for Christ’s birth, remember that Jesus came
 35 into the world for all people, rich and poor. (*CHILDREN*

proceed to the Nativity scene and place the shepherds with their sheep around the stable, then all the **CHILDREN** gather to sing the third verse of the “Song of Advent.”)

Song of Advent

Verse 3

(Sung to the tune of “Good Christian Men [or Friends] Rejoice”)

CHILDREN: (*Singing*) The shepherds knelt and cringed
with fear

When heavenly angels hovered near,
Bringing news of wondrous joy,
In Bethlehem is born a boy,
Child of man and God is born
In a stable so forlorn.
Shepherds rise and go,
Bethlehem’s star aglow.

Advent IV

(*READERS 1 and 2 enter and stand at the podium.*)

READER 1: Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. The wealth of the seas will be brought to you, to you the riches of the nations will come. Herds of camels will cover your land, young camels of Midian and Ephah. And all from Sheba will come, bearing gold and incense and proclaiming the praise of the Lord (Isaiah 60:1-3,5-6).

READER 2: Isaiah prophesied hundreds of years before Jesus’ birth that he would be born in Bethlehem and visited by kings. Today, on the fourth Sunday of



CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:

BUILDING THE NATIVITY

by Gail Gaymer Martin.

*For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script,
please contact us at:*

CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

P.O. Box 248 - Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Toll Free: 1-844-841-6387 - Fax (319) 368-8011

customerservice@christianpub.com