

CAROLING, CAROLING

by Susan A. J. Lyttek



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Caroling, Caroling

A collection of monologs inspired
by Christmas carols

by Susan A. J. Lyttek

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INTRODUCTION

Christmas carols have a dramatic history. Legend has it that St. Francis of Assisi popularized the first carols through enacting the Christmas story. From there, people wove carols into plays or sung them between acts.

This collection takes the opposite approach — it weaves drama into the carols. Each dramatic monolog is designed to lead into the song suggested as the song tie-in. In tone, theme and/or word use, the monolog parallels the carol. For optimum effect, the songs should begin promptly when the monolog is completed. This task could be coordinated with a song leader who has access to the scripts.

For staging and thematic purposes, these monologs have been divided into three categories: *We Were There*, people who actually or supposedly witnessed the circumstances surrounding Christ's birth; *Still We Come*, people from the congregation and their problems and/or testimonies regarding Christmas in their lives; and *He Will Fulfill*, a series of monologs related to Christmas prophecies and/or stories about Christ's role in our present and future. Each sub-collection may be used as a complete Christmas program, or monologs can be pulled from the entire collection to add a bit of drama into Advent services or a song program that has been partially established.

The monologs are designed to be simple to stage, with a minimum of props and no sets. In addition, they are ideal for last-minute changes in the program, as the monologs may be quickly memorized or read with equal effectiveness.

However you decide to use them, enjoy the results. This collection exists to let you and your church decide how you want to celebrate Christmas and honor the birth of Jesus.

Away in a Manger (*Woman*)

CATEGORY: We Were There — 1

SONG TIE-IN: “Away in a Manger”

COSTUME: Biblical robe and head covering.

PROPS: None.

WOMAN: (*Leaning forward confidentially, talking quietly*) Shhh. Can’t you see he’s sleeping? (*Looks over shoulder and down at an imaginary baby.*)

Hard to believe, isn’t it? A baby who is God. A baby who knows intimately everything he ever created, but can’t tell anyone because he can’t speak. A baby who shaped Adam and Eve from the earth, but he can’t hold up his own head — a head he both is and had created. Whew! Just thinking about it all twists my own head up in knots.

(*Looks again.*) But isn’t he precious? Ten little fingers and toes. Two little legs and arms. All wrapped tightly in cloths to make a warm, sleeping bundle of hope.

(*Looking toward the child*) Sleep now, Holy One. Rest now, Child of God. You have the time. You have the place. Soft, sweet straw. A warm barn, closed off from the night breezes. It won’t be long before soldiers seek your head. And not much beyond that when you give up every possibility of earthly glory for a crown that pierces you instead.

Enjoy your slumber, little Jesus child. (*To audience, raising a finger to her lips*) Shhh. Let him lay down his sweet head. (*Song begins.*)

Hark! the Herald Angels Sing (*Angel*)

CATEGORY: We Were There — 2

SONG TIE-IN: “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing”

COSTUME: Old, improperly fitting clothes. (An extra is needed to turn off lights.)

PROPS: None.

SCRUFFY-LOOKING OLDER MAN: I’m an angel. Been one since before this world was created. We come down and talk in all shapes and sizes. God’s sense of humor likes me in this shape. I wish sometimes he’d let me be huge and awe-inspiring. But that’s Gabriel’s job.

Enough about me already. That’s not what I came to tell you. I came to tell you what I saw that night. I came to tell you what I told the shepherds.

Yes, I was there. I squeezed through the narrow barn window with two of the other angels. I actually saw him take his first breath. I watched Mary and Joseph rip pieces of their cloaks to wrap him up snug and warm. Then we flew off, faster than fast, to tell the shepherds.

Though they were scared and awed by our singing, they didn’t all believe us — not at first. Some went to see him because they had to prove it to themselves. Some went hoping what we said was true. Only a couple believed on the spot. Some, when they saw him, still didn’t believe.

But isn’t that just like humans? I remember later, when he had his ministry, it was still like that. People wanted it to be true, but they couldn’t get themselves to believe it.

I don’t understand it. If I had followed Lucifer, there would be no hope for me. But humans have followed into darkness, and still God offers a hope. And still, given God’s gracious abundance, people choose to believe grace to be a lie. (*Angrily*) A lie? I was there, folks. I was a real... No, it was *more* real than anything

1 in this room.

2 What do you believe? (*Emphatically*) I know that he
3 was born that man no more may die, born to give you
4 second birth. But second birth is a gift based on
5 repentance and belief.

6 I ask you again: What do you believe?

7 (*Shouting praises*) Hail the incarnate Deity! Amen!
8 (*Lights out. Gradually turn lights back on as song begins.*)

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Silent Night (*Shepherd*)

CATEGORY: We Were There — 3

COSTUME: Robe.

SONG TIE-IN: “Silent Night”

PROPS: Shepherd’s staff.

SHEPHERD: Joseph Mohr, the guy who wrote “Silent Night” in 1818, had no idea. No idea what he was talking about. Silent? You call a little town, packed way beyond capacity with disgruntled taxpayers, silent? Not in my book. People were out and about at all hours. Why do you think we were still out in the field with the sheep? There was nowhere to drive them to. We couldn’t get an entire herd through Bethlehem safely with all that ruckus.

Silent? Hah! Have you ever heard the sound of a couple hundred sheep? They don’t know what it means to keep quiet once there’s a flock. Then you’ve got the occasional shouts or corrections of one of us shepherds. (*Shouting*) Hey, Josiah, catch that black sheep and stop it from going into the spelt field!

Silent? Donkeys and camels were everywhere, braying and snorting. And the smell! Whew! Being around sheep all the time, I’m rather numb to it. But I know the local townsfolk will be glad to have all the commotion over with and smell the sweet breezes from the fields to the north.

Silent? Have you ever heard an angel chorus? It’s loud with a capital “L.” You’d think they never did anything but sing. Anyone who was asleep, and that includes any of us shepherds who had managed to doze off, woke to the sound of those angels.

So, in my opinion, that night was anything but silent. Of course, Joseph Mohr wasn’t there, so he wouldn’t know. But being a pastor and all, he probably knew the baby.

When I went down with the other shepherds to see the baby, everything was still. It wasn’t that the people

1 stopped complaining; it wasn't that the donkeys
2 stopped braying; it wasn't that the angels stopped
3 singing. It was those little eyes. They looked right into
4 me. Bore all the way in like they could reach my soul.
5 And suddenly — noise or no noise — I felt a still, quiet
6 sort of peace. (*Deep breath, calmer speech*) The Messiah
7 had come. Everything would be more than all right.

8 So in a way, I guess Joseph Mohr was right. In the
9 heart of everyone who saw the Babe, it was the most
10 silent and holy of nights. (*Song begins.*)

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2 **What Child Is This?** (*Another Innkeeper's Wife*)
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4 **CATEGORY:** We Were There — 4 **COSTUME:** Hooded robe.

5 **SONG TIE-IN:** "What Child Is This?" **PROPS:** None.
6

7 **ANOTHER INNKEEPER'S WIFE:** I first saw them when I
8 was preparing a room for one of the centurions. I
9 looked out the window and there was this couple,
10 evidently poor, asking my Judah if we had room. Of
11 course, we didn't.

12 I wouldn't have thought twice about it, but when I
13 went to the well, my friend Abigail mentioned that they
14 had let a couple stay in their barn. The woman was
15 pregnant, it seemed. Somehow, I knew it was that
16 young couple I had seen through the centurion's
17 window. Normally, I have no reaction when we turn
18 people away. I can't afford to. Business is business. But
19 I couldn't get those two out of my mind. Would their
20 baby be born in Abigail's barn? That seemed such a
21 cruel way to enter the world.

22 I vowed that I would bring them a basket of food
23 after the customers were taken care of. Just a little
24 something. Just to see how she was doing.

25 When I finished cleaning up after dinner, arranging
26 the footwashings, and making certain everyone had
27 enough bedding to keep out the chill, it was quite late.
28 It had been dark for several hours when I made it
29 through the streets to the other inn. I brought a lamp
30 with extra oil to light my way, but I didn't need it.

31 Above the town, the most incredible star lit the night
32 sky. I had never seen it before. And I couldn't help
33 noticing that as I got closer to Abigail's, the star's light
34 grew brighter. Even warmer.

35 When I got to her barn, I had no doubt. That star was
36 shining right on it. Something special was going on
37 with that couple. No wonder I couldn't get them out of
38 my mind.

1 I walked in the open door and saw a group of
2 shepherds, mouths gaping open, staring at something. I
3 looked in the direction of their stare and saw the young
4 woman holding a newborn. So, the child had come. But
5 when my gaze shifted to the child, something changed
6 in me. I knew that this was no ordinary child. The
7 shepherds whispered, "Messiah."

8 Then I knew. I knew why I could not shake the image
9 of this couple. Then I knew why the star shone so
10 warmly on Bethlehem. Then I knew why I went out of
11 my way to be there that night. Then I knew that my life
12 would change forever.

13 *(Quieter, almost in tearful awe)* And as if in a blessing,
14 the baby bowed his head in my direction. Who was this
15 child? Was he really the Messiah? *(Song begins.)*
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2 **O Little Town of Bethlehem** (*Young Shepherd*)
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4 **CATEGORY:** We Were There — 5

5 **SONG TIE-IN:** “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

6 **COSTUME:** Biblical robe.

7 **PROPS:** Stuffed toy lamb, shepherd’s crook.
8

9 **YOUNG SHEPHERD:** I remember when the angels sang. It
10 was incredible. Then they told us to go into Bethlehem
11 to see what had happened.

12 With all my heart, I longed to go. But as soon as the
13 angels vanished from sight, I knew what would happen.
14 I knew what I would hear. “Junior, stay and keep an eye
15 on the sheep.”

16 That’s what happens when you’re an apprentice. You
17 get all the lousy jobs — like making sure none of the
18 sheep do their duty on the footpaths — and if they do,
19 you’ve got to sweep it off. Wouldn’t do for a priest to
20 step in it, you know. When we’re out all night, I get the
21 red-eye shift while the others slumber away. And when
22 the Messiah is born, I’m stuck back on a hilltop, holding
23 this sick lamb and trying to keep a couple hundred
24 sheep out of trouble.

25 Well, I decided to make the best out of a raw deal. I
26 still felt cheered by the angels’ song, and I was reluctant
27 to give in to a bad mood, so I stood on the highest point
28 and looked down on the village of Bethlehem.

29 From my height, it looked so peaceful. I saw the
30 buildings nestled against each other and the hills. I saw
31 the narrow avenues holding pockets of light between
32 the shadows. How many people, I wondered, were
33 asleep down there? How many even knew that the
34 angels had visited this hillside?

35 Suddenly, the awe of everything struck me. I had
36 heard angels. It didn’t matter if I saw the child — I
37 knew that he had come. I was told. (*Humbly*) An
38 apprentice shepherd from the tiniest of villages

1 between Bethlehem and Herodium. A nobody. And God
2 sent angels so that I could know there was a Savior.
3 Who am I?

4 Bethlehem, who are you? Did you know that night
5 that underneath your stars, the King of Kings was
6 born? Did you know that he came to you? (*Song begins.*)

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The First Nowel (*Reporter*)

CATEGORY: We Were There — 6

SONG TIE-IN: “The First Nowel”

COSTUME: Journalist hat with cards sticking out.

PROPS: Pen, notepad.

REPORTER: (*Writing on and off throughout*) Nowel. Did you know that means news? And this night is newsworthy. I’ve been tracking the story all night, and let me tell you — this is the biggest story of all time.

It all began when I got word that some shepherds had heard angels singing. I headed up the hillside just outside of Bethlehem. That’s where they were supposed to be herding. Trying to get an exclusive, you know? But I met them coming down. Turns out the angels had told them to go to a barn and see the new King of Israel. A king in a barn? This I had to see. Naturally, I followed them.

Underneath the largest star I had ever seen, the innkeeper’s barn was transformed. The wood that made up the frame seemed more real, more solid than anything I had ever seen. The animals in the stalls seemed purified, as if the light had rinsed them clean. I knew even before the shepherds told me that this was the place. But what kind of king could have this effect on nature? This I had to find out. This was the real story.

I went inside. Though a sense of overwhelming peace made me want to relax, duty drove me onward. I figured I’d go to the source — the mother and father of the child.

“So,” I asked them, “what makes this child so special? Isn’t he just another child?”

The father laughed. “No. This is God’s son. This is the Messiah.”

The Messiah. This story is more than news. It’s good news. (*Song begins.*)

The Coventry Carol (*Herod*)

CATEGORY: We Were There — 7

SONG TIE-IN: “The Coventry Carol”

COSTUME: Robe and crown.

PROPS: None.

HEROD: (*Pacing across stage regally, with anger*) Another king.

Those miserable wise men had the nerve to tell me that someone outside of my palace was born King of the Jews. Of all the rotten insubordination. Just like those old-line Jews to brew up something like this. Or maybe those Zealots are behind it. All I know is, it’s mighty convenient to have prophecies about a new king. Mighty convenient. (*Scratches head thoughtfully.*) Like they think I’m going to believe in some old holy books?

No, it has to be a trick. Power is the key. And the answer is...the answer is... (*Snaps fingers*) blood. Of course. The answer is always blood. A king was born, then a king will die. They have before. As soon as they tell me where this baby is, the baby will feel my blade caress its throat. Usurpers have never slowed me down. I am here. I am king to stay.

(*With rage bordering on madness*) I am King. (*Pounds table/podium.*) I am King, I tell you! (*Pounds again.*) King Herod the Great! The once and future king of all Judea. I and my line will live forever!

(*Quietly*) And I will do whatever it takes to make it so. (*Song begins.*)

1
2 **Go, Tell It on the Mountain** (*Old Shepherd*)
3

4 **CATEGORY:** We Were There — 8

5 **SONG TIE-IN:** “Go, Tell It on the Mountain”

6 **COSTUME:** Biblical robe.

7 **PROPS:** Shepherd’s staff.
8

9 **OLD SHEPHERD:** Never thought I’d live to see the day. The
10 Promised One born right here in David’s City.

11 Even with my failing eyes, I couldn’t fail to see. No
12 one told me an angel chorus could flood the sky with
13 light and song. But I know now. No one told me that a
14 baby could heal me. But he did.

15 We went down to the manger, just like the angels told
16 us. Light led us. We couldn’t have missed the manger if
17 we tried. We arrived as silently as possible. Still, the
18 baby stirred. Then he reached for me. His mother
19 handed him to me. As a grandfather, I’ve held my share
20 of newborns. This one, though in the same form my
21 children and grandchildren took, knew things. In a soft,
22 little gesture, the babe reached out and touched my
23 face. Instantly, my sight cleared. And I cried.

24 I left the manger later. But the manger and the child
25 did not leave me. I told everyone. I told everything.
26 (*Lifting foot and placing it down as if on a stone.*) Why, if
27 these stones could talk, they would tell you how many
28 times I’ve rejoiced.

29 My Savior healed me. He healed all of me. And if
30 there’s no one around to tell, I’ll tell this hill. (*Pause.*
31 *Stares into the distance.*) I’d even tell the mountains. (*Song*
32 *begins.*)
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We Three Kings (*Wise Man*)

CATEGORY: We Were There — 9 **COSTUME:** Royal robe.
SONG TIE-IN: “We Three Kings” **PROPS:** Walking stick.

WISE MAN: Don’t know where history got the idea that there were three of us. There was a full dozen of us — at least at the beginning.

The first of our troop left when it became evident that we would have to leave Persia to reach the new King. If it wasn’t a Persian king, he didn’t care to make the effort. A king from another nation couldn’t advance his career.

The next one left when the star hid behind the clouds one night. He couldn’t be bothered to wait. Another one left when we began to ration food. Still another one left when we had to cross some desert. There were two brothers with us. They left when we lost a camel and they found out that they’d be forced to walk.

There were six of us when we approached Herod. Talk about a knee-knocking experience! At one point, he was ready to kill all of us — our influence with Rome and our own countries did not matter. He was mad with fury. Three of us dropped out then.

So close. We had followed the star all the way to Judea. We now knew we would find the King in Bethlehem. But, in fear of an earthly king, we handed over our gifts to Caspar and headed for home. In fear, we missed what could have been the most joyous moment of our lives. In fear, we closed our eyes to the heavenly King.

Yes, there were twelve of us. And six who reached Judea — following the star for months in hope and expectation. But only three had the courage and the faith to make it to Bethlehem.

(*Wringing cloak*) Oh, Lord, that I might have been one of them! (*Song begins.*)

1
2 **O Come, All Ye Faithful** (*Another Wise Man*)
3

4 **CATEGORY:** We Were There — 10

5 **SONG TIE-IN:** “O Come, All Ye Faithful”

6 **COSTUME:** Rich-looking robe.

7 **PROPS:** Scrolls.
8

9 **ANOTHER WISE MAN:** (*Holding up scrolls*) It was here. That’s
10 how I knew he would come. It didn’t matter how far I
11 would have to travel. I had to be here.

12 My companions knew the significance of the star. To
13 me, that wasn’t the main issue. It was what was in these
14 scrolls — and in here. (*Points to heart.*) Everything that
15 was inside me was calling to the promise of the Messiah.
16 A king for all time. A king who could meet my needs —
17 even those I let no one else know about.

18 I came because I had to. It was a matter of faith, of
19 knowing, of belief.

20 How many others were invited to the manger? Who
21 knows? It could have been thousands. Only those who
22 actually came were identified in the Bible. Only those
23 who acted on faith.

24 That’s all the Messiah ever calls, you realize. He only
25 calls the faithful. He invites everyone, but he calls the
26 faithful.

27 (*Hand cupped to ear*) Listen. Do you hear his call? (*Song*
28 *begins.*)
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1
2 **Good Christian Men, Rejoice** (*Older Man*)
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4 **CATEGORY:** Still We Come — 1

5 **SONG TIE-IN:** “Good Christian Men, Rejoice”

6 **COSTUME:** Contemporary clothes.

7 **PROPS:** Cane (optional).
8

9 **OLDER MAN:** (*Leaning on cane*) Whew! Can’t move around
10 like I used to. Can’t do much just like I used to. But
11 nothing would stop me from coming to church on this
12 night.

13 Christmas Eve. When I was a child, I thought there
14 was something magical about Christmas Eve. No, not
15 Santa Claus. Santa Claus may be an entertaining
16 legend, but there’s nothing *real* about it. What I sensed
17 came from beyond this world. Something very
18 powerful. Very real. And I called it magic as a child,
19 because I didn’t understand it. Not that I understand it
20 much better now.

21 Incarnation. Just the word sends shivers down my
22 spine. That’s what we celebrate tonight, folks. The day
23 may be wrong. But *when* Jesus was born is not as
24 important as the fact that he *was* born. He was born!
25 God was born in a barn so that all who believed in him
26 could escape a deserved eternity in hell. I don’t know
27 about you, but to me, that’s true magic. Because when
28 Jesus was born, the impossible grace of God became
29 human.

30 No, nothing would stop me from coming to church on
31 this night. It’s more than magic. (*Begins to leave the*
32 *podium or stage, then leans back, whispering into the*
33 *microphone.*) It’s miraculous. (*Song begins.*)
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God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen (*Young Man*)

CATEGORY: Still We Come — 2

SONG TIE-IN: “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”

COSTUME: Suit and tie.

PROPS: Christmas gift labeled “To Mom.”

YOUNG MAN: (*Runs up to podium/stage, panting, gift in hand.*) I made it! Didn’t think I would. Had to get that last-minute Christmas shopping in, you know? I’ve been rushing in and out of stores all day. Even so, I almost forgot to get Mom a present. That wouldn’t do. That wouldn’t do at all. (*Stage whisper*) Especially since I still live under her roof.

(*Shaking, scratching head*) Don’t know why I leave the shopping for the last minute. I think it’s because once the gifts get exchanged, Christmas is almost over. I love the “peace on earth, good will to men” stuff. Everyone’s so much happier when they’re getting ready for Christmas.

But by procrastinating, I admit, I don’t get to enjoy much of the season. Somehow, I don’t see the lights or hear the songs until I stop running around. Like on the way here, I got stopped at a traffic light. I was already late, so I was getting a little heavy with my horn. Then, when I rolled down my window to yell at the guy in the left lane, I heard carolers singing a beautiful old song. “Rest,” it said. And for a moment, I did. I could see the stars and feel the tingle of frost on my nose. (*Sighing*)

Wouldn’t it be great to have that kind of rest all year long? But that’s impossible — or is it?

(*Getting busy again, adjusting tie/jacket*) Well, it’s time to get to Mom’s. Wouldn’t want to arrive when the dinner is cold. (*Chuckling*) If I did, my gift would need to be rubies!

Merry Christmas, everyone! (*Song begins.*)

In the Bleak Midwinter (*Young Woman*)

CATEGORY: Still We Come — 3

SONG TIE-IN: “In the Bleak Midwinter”

COSTUME: Contemporary clothing.

PROPS: Book.

YOUNG WOMAN: (*Reading book as she walks up to stage*) Do you like poetry? I do. It’s getting more popular these days. But I prefer the poets of days gone by.

Many of our Christmas carols were written by poets. Did you know that? Isaac Watts, Longfellow, and Charles Wesley spring to mind. But two Christmas hymns of note were written by one of the 19th century’s most prolific poets. “In the Bleak Midwinter” and “Love Came Down at Christmas” were written by a female poet from a family of poets — Christina Georgina Rossetti. She and her brothers, all renowned poets, began composing poetry as a form of amusement — a parlor game. Soon they found they were quite good at it. Next thing you know, their names began appearing everywhere.

They didn’t have fame as a motive, but it came anyway. Their poems honored God and the life he had given them.

(*Dreamily*) If only... (*Silent pause*) Maybe someday, my poems will be as beautiful as Christina’s. Maybe...if I give Christ my heart. (*Song begins.*)

1
2 **I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve** (*Child*)
3

4 **CATEGORY:** Still We Come — 4

5 **SONG TIE-IN:** “I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve”

6 **COSTUME:** Contemporary clothing.

7 **PROPS:** A mom.
8

9 **CHILD** (about 12): I didn’t really want to come up here. You
10 all know me. There’s nothing special about me. Like
11 anybody, I love Christmas.

12 In school, we talk a lot about what we want and what
13 we’re going to get. That’s the big deal about Christmas
14 for most of my friends. And sure, I like that stuff. Who
15 would turn down presents? But my parents made sure I
16 knew early on that there was a lot more to Christmas
17 than the things I got. Especially my mom. Every year,
18 when she put up the tree, she would tell me the special
19 meanings for each of the ornaments. There’s an
20 ornament that looks like a miniature crèche. Then
21 there’s a whole bunch of crosses that look like they’re
22 made of ice. And as she hung the ornaments, she’d tell
23 me again about how Jesus was born in Bethlehem and
24 why he was born. Dad did the same thing when we had
25 devotions after dinner, but when Mom did it, it was
26 more real because I could see the ornaments right in
27 front of me. And she got so enthusiastic, I knew she
28 meant it.

29 And so, Christmas means more to me than presents
30 and parties. (*Pointing to woman in audience*) Stand up and
31 take a bow, Mom. (*Pauses, waiting for her to stand.*) Come
32 on, Mom. (*Woman reluctantly obliges.*) Because of you, I
33 love Christmas for Jesus’ sake. (*Song begins.*)
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1
2 **Ding! Dong! Merrily on High** (*Bell-Ringer*)
3

4 **CATEGORY:** Still We Come — 5

5 **SONG TIE-IN:** “Ding! Dong! Merrily on High”

6 **COSTUME:** Contemporary clothing.

7 **PROPS:** A hand bell, white glove, as many bells as possible for exit.
8

9 **APPRENTICE BELL-RINGER:** (*Swings bell, then tries frantically*
10 *to get it to stop ringing.*) **How do you get this thing to stop?**
11 (*“Accidentally” places bell firmly next to arm and it stops.*)

12 **Oh boy! It’s not as easy as I thought it would be. I**
13 **decided last week that I wanted to learn to play the**
14 **bells. It seemed like the thing to do. Something easy and**
15 **festive to get me in the Christmas spirit.** (*Tries bell again*
16 *and can’t get it to stop.*) **Oh well, so much for the easy part.**

17 **I’ve always liked bells because they sound heavenly.**
18 **I mean that literally. I imagined that whenever people**
19 **celebrated Christ’s birth on earth, great throngs of**
20 **people and angels sang to the tune of bells in heaven.**
21 **This may sound corny, but I’ve even called bell choirs**
22 **God’s ear ambrosia. Their sound lingers in the air long**
23 **after the song is over. Their very presence seems to**
24 **tickle the air. When I hear bells, I want to leap and jump**
25 **in praise.**

26 **I guess this year I just started too late to ring in the**
27 **songs of rejoicing.** (*Rings bell and smoothly pulls it to stop at*
28 *side. Then, with triumph*) **But just you wait until next**
29 **Christmas!** (*Pulls out several bells, maybe even has bells on a*
30 *chain and in pockets as leaving stage. Song begins.*)
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I Wonder as I Wander (*Housewife*)

CATEGORY: Still We Come — 6

SONG TIE-IN: “I Wonder as I Wander”

COSTUME: Contemporary clothing with dirty apron.

PROPS: Spatula.

STEREOTYPICAL HOUSEWIFE: (*Spatula in hand, apron on, hair mussed*) I’m tired. Too much cookie baking, card stamping, and gift shopping. And too much kid whining and begging for every toy that shows up on TV.

(*Sighs.*) I read somewhere that more people get depressed around Christmas than any other time of the year. I believe it. Even when you know the true meaning of the day, it’s easy to get overwhelmed by the busyness, materialism, and the phony trappings of secular celebrations.

When it really gets to me, I count the seconds until the kids’ dad comes home. Then I tell him I need a Mom time out. He knows I mean a 15-minute walk, so he puts up with it.

Somehow, wandering around outside in the brisk air of early winter mends my day. Under the stars, Jesus’ birth becomes real again. And when he becomes true to me, the weary sorrow fades. (*Reverently*) It’s Bethlehem all over again, and I’m walking to see the manger. (*Song begins.*)

1
2 **I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day** (*Businessman*)
3

4 **CATEGORY:** Still We Come — 7

5 **SONG TIE-IN:** “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day”

6 **COSTUME:** Tailored suit with handkerchief in breast pocket.

7 **PROPS:** Briefcase with business papers.
8

9 **BUSINESSMAN:** (*With regret*) It can’t be Christmas. After a
10 day like I just had, it couldn’t possibly be Christmas.
11 (*Sets case down, sorts through papers as he talks.*)

12 I was in charge of the merger takeover with Smithling,
13 Inc. No big deal — mergers are what I get paid to do.
14 That’s what our corporation specializes in. Saving
15 worthwhile products from companies that are about to
16 go belly-up. It’s never anything personal — layoffs,
17 downsizing and corporate restructuring are just part of
18 the territory. People might get hurt, but it’s my job to
19 see that the deal costs our company as little as possible.
20 Sometimes I play rough. But it’s because I have to. It’s
21 what I do.

22 Today was different. The man on the opposite side of
23 the table was my best friend. I wanted to go easy on
24 him, but I couldn’t. You understand, don’t you? I had to
25 do my job.

26 He pleaded with me. He asked for mercy. Couldn’t I
27 find a slot for him in our company? Soon, I stopped
28 listening. After thirty years, I’m good at that. He had to
29 understand that if I accommodated him, I wouldn’t be
30 doing my job. If I gave him mercy, I’d be in the same
31 situation he was — fifty-something, a family to support,
32 a lifetime of bills, and no certainty about the income to
33 pay for it all.

34 I did stop listening. But that didn’t help. I had to keep
35 looking. You should’ve seen his eyes as he left the room.
36 The pain in those eyes haunts me even now. (*Hand bells*
37 *or a recording of hand bells softly play a carol, preferably “I*
38 *Heard the Bells on Christmas Day,” while he finishes talking.*)

1 **How can I be merry with those eyes staring at me?** (*With*
2 *anguish*) **How can I celebrate God's gift, knowing what I**
3 **did to my friend?** (*Leaves stage with head hanging down and*
4 *handkerchief held over eyes.*)

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1
2 **Still, Still, Still** (*Grandmother*)
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4 **CATEGORY:** Still We Come — 8 **COSTUME:** Contemporary
5 clothing.

6 **SONG TIE-IN:** “Still, Still, Still” **PROPS:** None.
7

8 **GRANDMOTHER-TYPE:** (*Shaking her head*) So much sadness.
9 So much sorrow.

10 But that’s why he was born, isn’t it? Can you imagine
11 if he never came, if there were no Christians on earth?
12 The world would’ve been a sadder place. A place
13 without hope.

14 Jesus came to give believers joy, hope, and abundant
15 life. But often, we have to get quiet in order for the joy
16 to touch us. We cover our daily life with so much noise
17 and hubbub that we drown out Jesus and his blessings.

18 I remember the Christmas when my son was six or
19 seven. It seemed everything that my parents and
20 brothers got him that year was noisy: drum set, trucks
21 with horns, a recorder flute, and an army man who
22 talked. As he opened his gifts, he played with them.
23 Soon, he was playing with all of them at once. What a
24 ruckus! He was so busy and loud, he couldn’t be
25 bothered to listen to us. He hadn’t opened our present.
26 He hadn’t opened the one thing he’d been requesting
27 for months. He wasn’t quiet enough to hear a puppy
28 yipping for affection on our back porch.

29 Eventually, he found the dog. The two of them were
30 best friends until he went to college. But while he was
31 loudly playing with his new toys, he told us later that he
32 was sad because he thought we had forgotten to get him
33 anything. And he was hurt because he thought we
34 forgot how much he wanted a dog of his own.

35 But we hadn’t forgotten — no more than Jesus forgets
36 what we need. We just have to get quiet and still and
37 wait for him to tell us what he has waiting on the back
38 porch. (*Song begins.*)

1
2 **It Came Upon the Midnight Clear** (*Pastor*)
3

4 **CATEGORY:** Still We Come — 9

5 **SONG TIE-IN:** “It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

6 **COSTUME:** Contemporary clothing.

7 **PROPS:** None.
8

9 **PASTOR, DEACON OR ELDER:** Have you been outside
10 tonight? I mean, have you really *been* outside? Not just
11 between house and car, car and church. Have you
12 stayed out long enough to look at the stars, to feel the
13 air on your face?

14 Every Christmas Eve, I spend some time outdoors in
15 prayer. If the weather is bad, it cuts my prayer time
16 short, but I still go out. No matter what the weather,
17 there’s a special feeling in the air at Christmas. Maybe
18 part of it is the seasonal chill. But even when it’s warm
19 on Christmas, I feel it. Maybe it’s the length of the night.
20 But though I’ve never been to Australia at Christmas,
21 I’m convinced I’d feel it there, too. Maybe it’s all the
22 singing, like we’ve had here tonight, filling the air. But
23 even in the silence, I feel it.

24 I think, (*Self-conscious pause*) don’t laugh, that it’s the
25 echo of the angels’ song that makes Christmas feel
26 special. It’s knowing that God loved the earth so much
27 that he sent his Son to be born among us. That
28 knowledge fills the air with a hum of joy. And it’s the
29 prayer for peace on earth and good will toward all that
30 ties everyone together.

31 Soon, we’ll leave this place. In our own cars, in our
32 homes, we may forget what brought us here tonight. If
33 so, I offer you this invitation:

34 Step outside. Listen to the angels sing. (*Song begins.*)
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When Christmas Morn is Dawning (*Girl*)

CATEGORY: Still We Come — 10

SONG TIE-IN: “When Christmas Morn is Dawning” (German Folksong)

COSTUME: Contemporary clothing.

PROPS: Baby Jesus and manger from crèche.

GIRL: In my house, we do something neat every year. You see these? (*Shows baby Jesus and manger — one in each hand.*) These don’t go into the barn under the tree until after our Christmas Eve service. They never do. It’s something Mom and Dad started before I was born. Dad says it helps us look forward to Jesus. It makes the Jesus part of Christmas bigger than all the presents and everything.

Jesus gets bigger and more important because we know he’s missing, but he’ll come. Weird, huh?

I guess it’s like when people first realize that God’s out there. Suddenly, he gets bigger and more important to them because they know something’s missing from their lives.

(*Thoughtfully and slowly*) I guess that’s how it is. But he also gets real important when we put him in the barn. Because then he’s in the center, and everyone looks at him.

I like our baby Jesus (*Holds it out again*) because it really looks like a little baby. And I can’t wait until I get to put it in the barn under the tree — just where Mary and Joseph and everyone else can see him best! (*Song begins.*)

Joy to the World (*Christmas Eve Sketch*)

CATEGORY: Still We Come — 11

SONG TIE-IN: “Joy to the World”

COSTUME: Characters should wear the same clothing that they wore for their monologs.

PROPS: Hymnals.

(Complete cast of the Still We Come category is On-stage, holding hymnals. Led by PASTOR [or other in monolog 9], alternating among all speakers.)

PASTOR: Why would we come together to celebrate his birth? Why indeed?

YOUNG WOMAN: Is it to sing songs?

OLDER MAN: Is it to talk about Christmas memories?

BUSINESSMAN: Is it to experience grace and forgiveness?

PASTOR: Or is it something more than all three?

HOUSEWIFE: I see it in the stars.

YOUNG MAN: I see the hope of rest.

CHILD: I see it in the example of my parents.

PASTOR: What is it? Can you tell me why our hearts pulled us here tonight? Can you tell me why we assemble together in song and prayer?

GRANDMOTHER: Can’t you see? It is the thrill of hope. It is knowing that the blessings that stream from the birth of the Holy Child are our perfect gifts.

GIRL: It’s the baby in the center of everything.

BELL-RINGER: It is not just a song, but a song that is sung in heaven and on earth.

PASTOR: It is a holy song. It is the story of the birth of Jesus, our Savior. It is a song that, even if people refuse to tell it, will be sung by the rocks and trees and hills. It is a song of truth, grace, and righteousness. We have not just come to sing, we have come to tell.

ALL: Joy to the world! (*Song begins.*)

1
2 **Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (*Man*)**
3

4 **CATEGORY:** He Will Fulfill — 1

5 **SONG TIE-IN:** “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

6 **COSTUME:** Contemporary clothing.

7 **PROPS:** None.
8

9 **MAN:** (*Arms raised*) **Yes, Emmanuel, come!**

10 (*Lowering arms*) Christmas is a celebration where
11 after the first time of waiting, God delivered what he
12 had promised. A Savior would be born of the tribe of
13 Judah in the little city of Bethlehem.

14 We are in the second time of waiting. The second
15 Advent, if you will. The first time, the Savior’s arrival
16 was meek and humble. He came as a baby, lived as a
17 servant, and died as a criminal. But he rose victorious
18 to sit at the right hand of God! The meekness is behind
19 him. The second arrival will be powerful and
20 triumphant. Jesus will come again in glory and honor.
21 God has told us this. And we wait.

22 Two thousand years is a long time. But it wouldn’t
23 matter if it were three thousand or seven thousand.
24 God is true. In the fullness of time, the second Advent
25 will be over.

26 God delivers what he promises.

27 (*Dramatic pause. Arms raised again.*) **Come, thou long-**
28 **expected Jesus... Raise us to thy glorious throne!** (*Song*
29 *begins.*)
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1
2 **O Come, O Come, Emmanuel** (*Isaiah*)
3

4 **CATEGORY:** He Will Fulfill — 2

COSTUME:

5 Biblical robe

6 **SONG TIE-IN:** “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” **PROPS:** None.
7

8 **ISAIAH:** Having been a prophet of God had its advantages.

9 One was that I had no doubt that the Messiah would
10 come. God showed me through his word and visions.

11 But even so, I watched with interest when the Messiah
12 Jesus was born. It was awe-inspiring to see the words I
13 had written down as God commanded click into place.
14 He did indeed come from the stump of Jesse. He was
15 indeed born of a virgin — who also descended from
16 Jesse. He was the child born, the son given, who now
17 wears the government of the world upon his shoulders.
18 He is the royal judge now, because he was the suffering
19 servant on earth.

20 But I’m getting ahead of myself. Did God not show me
21 the prophet in the wilderness? Did not the Lord have
22 me write that penalty for the sins of all would be met?
23 Did I not write that the Jewish people would be a light
24 to the Gentiles — a way for the whole world to know the
25 saving love of God? Did I not even say that the Lord and
26 the servant were one and the same?

27 Again and again I wrote these things. I used new
28 words so that my people would understand what God
29 had told me. Still, they did not hear. They wanted their
30 Messiah, not the one God had promised. They wanted a
31 temporary solution — not an eternal one.

32 What about you? When you call to Emmanuel, do you
33 want who he really is?

34 Almost half of what I wrote has not yet happened.
35 Emmanuel, Messiah Jesus, will come again. He will
36 come with glory to restore Israel and judge the nations.
37 Do you want him to come? Are you willing to ask him to
38 return — or do you want the temporary things instead?

1 *(Song begins.)*

2 **As With Gladness Men of Old** *(Young Man)*

3

4 **CATEGORY:** He Will Fulfill — 3

5 **SONG TIE-IN:** “As With Gladness Men of Old”

6 **COSTUME:** Contemporary clothing.

7 **PROPS:** Christmas card with star on front (optional).

8

9 **YOUNG MAN:** Have you ever noticed that most pictures
10 drawn of the Bethlehem star look like crosses? I always
11 wondered if that was intentional or if that was the way
12 God wanted it portrayed — or both. As the star guided
13 the wise men to the manger, the cross now guides those
14 who seek Jesus. As the star pointed to both earth and
15 heaven, so the resurrected Jesus reconnects people to
16 God. Through his sacrifice, and our acceptance of it, we
17 are restored to fellowship with our Creator.

18 But then, I wondered if the star and the cross were
19 one and the same. Perhaps it’s my fascination with
20 science fiction that prompts this thought. Still, I know
21 through the Bible that time does not constrain God. He
22 acts in time, he created time, but time does not govern
23 his actions. What if the glorified cross were the star that
24 led the wise men to Jesus? What if the star remains a
25 mystery because God placed it in the right constellation
26 at the right time, removed from a future time when the
27 promise had been fulfilled?

28 Some day, we will know. But on that day when we see
29 Jesus in all his glory, we will no longer need the star.
30 We will have the Star of stars. *(Song begins.)*

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