

The Spirit of Christmas

Created by: Diane Venzera

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Today we celebrated the spirit of Christmas with a Candle Lighting Ceremony. It is based on the book, ***Mary Did You Know?***, by Mark Lowry. (There is also a song of the same title by Cathy Matea) This story is a joyous celebration of the birth and life of Jesus.

As the story is read, 12 children, in turn, light a red candle from our Christ candle. Red signifies life and the Christ candle signifies the Christ light that burns within all of us.

After the candle lighting ceremony we listen to the song ***HANDS*** by Jewel. This is a song by a popular artist with a beautiful message of love and empowerment. The last lines of the song are:

IN THE END, ONLY KINDNESS MATTERS,
I WILL GET DOWN ON MY KNEES AND I WILL PRAY...
WE ARE NEVER BROKEN,
WE ARE GOD'S EYES, GOD'S HANDS, GOD'S MIND.

This is a most important message for all of the children to understand. We had them look at their hands and focus on the fact that everything they touch, they touch with God's hands, not just their own. If they realize that they also see with God's eyes and think with God's mind we then empower them to go forth to create a beautiful, loving world.

This program can be presented just as a Sunday school special event, a presentation to the parents or can be part of a Christmas presentation to your congregation.

Costume Suggestions (Optional)

Narrators: Dressed more formally in holiday colors.

Speakers: Can be dressed as angels.

Candle Lighters: Dressed in reds and yellows.

Christ Candle Lighter: Dressed in white.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- ♥ One long table
- ♥ Festive table cloth
- ♥ Christ candle
- ♥ 12 red candles with stands
- ♥ CD player
- ♥ Meditative music
- ♥ Tiny key ring flashlights (one for each child)
- ♥ The book ***“Mary, Did You Know?”*** by Mark Lowry, published by WATERBROOK PRESS, 5446 N. Academy Blvd., Suite 200, Colorado Springs, CO, 80918 ISBN #1-57856-179-5
- ♥ The CD, ***“Hands”*** by Jewel (Kilcher)
- ♥ Lyrics to the above song.
- ♥ A copy of the script for each speaking part.
- ♥ Podium for the Narrators

THE CAST

- ♥ Lighter of the Christ Candle
 - ♥ 5 Narrators
 - ♥ 12 Candle Lighters
 - ♥ 12 Speakers
- (If your Sunday school is small the 12 Candle Lighters can also do the speaking parts.)*

SETTING THE STAGE

- ♥ Place the long table with the festive tablecloth at the front of the chapel.
- ♥ Place the Christ candle in the center of the table, surrounded by the 12 red candles.
- ♥ Turn the lights low and play some soft meditative, background music.
- ♥ Basket filled with the key chain flashlights.
- ♥ Put the podium off to the side of the table with an extra copy of the script. The Narrators should also keep their copies with them to read from.

THE CEREMONY

- ♥ After the audience is seated, the **Christ Candle Lighter** enters and stands behind the Christ candle facing the audience.
- ♥ The 12 Candle lighters (6 on each side) are seated a few feet behind the table. They will come forward as they are needed.
- ♥ The Narrators are seated near the podium.
- ♥ The 12 Speakers are seated off to the side opposite of the podium, ready to come forward as their part is up.

Christ Candle Lighter: *(As he or she is lighting the Christ candle.)*

“Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born, if He’s not born in thee, thy soul is all forlorn.” *(When finished, he/she sits down.)*

Everyone: We behold the Christ that is found in everyone.

Narrator #1: *(Walks to the podium to read the speech.*

“Today we gather together to honor the Christ Spirit that dwells in each of our hearts. Each time we recognize this Spirit in ourselves and in others, Christ is born anew. Today we recognize the great works of the man Jesus, who came to share this message of love: “God is the love that lives in us all and through us all.” *(When finished, he/she sits down.)*

In turn, each narrator goes to the podium and reads their lines. After the narrator reads his or her line, the Speaker stands up and reads their Bible quote & Bible reference. As the quote is being read the Candle lighter comes forward to light their candle. He/she takes one red candle, lights it from the Christ candle and returns it to the stand. When both Speaker and Candle lighter have finished they return to their seats and the next Speaker steps forward. An adult may show the illustrations from the book to the rest of the children as it is read.

Narrator #2: “Mary, did you know that your baby boy will one day walk on water?”

- Speaker #1:** “Early in the morning Jesus came walking toward them on the sea.” Matthew 14:25
- Narrator #2:** “Mary, did you know that your baby boy will save our sons and daughters?”
- Speaker #2:** “Then Jesus cried aloud, Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me see him who sent me. I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me should not remain in the darkness.” John 12:44-46
- Narrator #2:** “Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new? That child you’ve delivered will soon deliver you.
- Speaker #3:** “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creations: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17
- Narrator #3:** “Mary, did you know that your baby boy will give sight to a blind man?”
- Speaker #4:** “What do you want me to do for you? He said, Lord, let me see again. Jesus said to him, Receive your sight; your faith has saved you!” Luke 18:41-42
- Narrator #3:** “Mary, did you know that your baby boy will calm a storm with His hand?”
- Speaker #5:** “And He said to them, Why are you afraid, you of little faith? Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm.” Matthew 8:26
- Narrator #3:** “Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod?”
- Speaker #6:** “...for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me.” John 6:38
- Narrator #4:** “When you kiss your little baby you’ve kissed the face of God.”

- Speaker #7:** “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:12-13
- Narrator #4:** “The blind will see, the deaf will hear, the dead will live again. The lame will leap, the dumb will speak the praises of the Lamb!”
- Speaker #8:** “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; and he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil for God was with him.” Acts 10:38
- Narrator #4:** “Mary, did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all creation?”
- Speaker #9:** “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible,...all things have been created through him and for him.”
1 Col 1:15-16
- Narrator #5:** “Mary, did you know that your baby boy will one day rule the nations?”
- Speaker #10:** “The angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” Luke 1:30-33

Before the end of the ceremony pass out the small flashlights to the audience.

- Narrator #5:** “Did you know that your baby boy is heaven’s perfect lamb?”

Speaker #11: “The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and declared, Here is the Lamb of God...I saw the Spirit descending from the heaven like a dove, and it remained on him.” John 1:29, 32

Narrator #5: “This sleeping child you’re holding is the Great I AM!”

Speaker #12: “Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” John 14:6

Encourage the audience to light their flashlights as the last narrator is speaking.

Narrator #1: Let us all light our lights and know in our hearts that we are all **The Great I AM!** Amen.

THE CLOSING

- ♥ Pass out the lyrics to the song “***Hands.***”
- ♥ Play the song and invite the children to sing along or just listen to the words.
- ♥ Share with them that the message of the song is important to all of us. Encourage them to look at their hands and focus on the fact that everything they touch, they touch with God’s hands, not just their own. If they realize that they also see with God’s eyes, and think with Godmind, we then empower them to go forth to create a more beautiful and loving world.

HANDS

Written by: Jewel Kilcher

If I could tell the world just one thing, it would be that we're all OK.
And not to worry, because worry is wasteful and useless in times like these.
I won't be made useless; I won't be idle with despair.
I will gather myself around my faith.
For light does the darkness most fear.

My hands are small, I know, but they're not yours they are my own.
And I am never broken.

Poverty stole your golden shoes, but it didn't steal your laughter.
And heartache came to visit me, but I knew it wasn't ever after.
We'll fight, not out of spite, for someone must stand up for what's right.
Because where there's a man who has no voice,
there ours shall go on singing.

My hands are small I know, but they're not yours they are my own.
I am never broken.

In the end only kindness matters.
I will get down on my knees and I will pray.

My hands are small I know, but they're not yours they are my own.

We are never broken.

We are God's eyes, God's hands, God's mind.
We are God's hands, God's heart, God's mind.