To Us
A Child is Born

Isaiah 9:6

A Bible Story Musical with Activities for Preschool Children

by Karyn Henley and Kristi West
Karyn Henley’s PLAYSONGS™ Musicals:  
To Us a Child is Born

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May God bless your ministry to children.

[Signature]

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Introduction

These musicals are designed to provide an age-appropriate medium for preschool children, ages four and five. Our hope is that the children who participate will enjoy God, gain a greater understanding of His love for them, and share their love for God with others through telling God's Word in story and song.

Age-Appropriate Features

This musical contains several features which we believe enhance a preschooler's experience in learning and retelling Bible stories. These age-appropriate features include:

• Multi-sensory experiences because preschoolers learn best by doing and using all their senses,
• Short duration for their short attention spans,
• Simple lines, songs and actions to insure that all the children can participate successfully,
• Minimal props, sets and costumes that can be created easily from materials normally found in school supplies (optional),
• Preparation time that can be accomplished during normal class time without special rehearsals,
• Enrichment activities, to reinforce the Bible story.

The Format

The design of this musical gives the greater share of the storytelling responsibility to the teacher or adult volunteer who tells or reads the story as the narrator, giving vocal cues to the children throughout the play. The children learn short responses to these cues, so that the musical is performed in a responsive reading fashion. Many of the cues are repeated throughout the story, which helps the children learn and remember their lines more easily. Actions and movement enhance the children's spoken parts.

Curriculum Enhancement

This musical can be utilized in a classroom setting in a variety of ways. You may desire to use this musical as a four-week curriculum. Learning the musical and doing the activities can easily fill four class periods.

Or you may wish to introduce the musical during a quarter as an extra activity to enhance the curriculum you are presently using.
The activities found in the second half of this book include arts and crafts, scripture memory, music and movement, science, cooking, and games. These activities will give the children a variety of experiences that reinforce the lessons taught through the Bible story.

Keep in mind that this book is to be used as a guide. Feel free to use any ideas you may have for costumes, props and other activities that you feel are appropriate.

Remember that the main objective is for the children to enjoy learning more about God and to share the Bible story with an audience. Props, sets, costumes and other preparations should never overshadow the focus of what God desires to do with the children as they learn and tell His truth.

**Children’s Lines and Cues**

When the narrator reads a line or phrase of words that is underlined, this is the cue for the children’s response. In the sample below, the words “three grown up boys” is the cue for the children to raise their arms, show their muscles and say “One, two, three!” This may occur several times throughout the story, but the cue will be the same each time, underlined so the teacher/narrator will know how to emphasize the cues. The children’s response will be the same every time they hear this cue.

**Teacher**
Noah had a wife.
Noah also had **three grown up boys**.

**Children**
One, two three!
(Make strong arms, showing muscles)

**Hand Motions and Actions**

Diagrams throughout the script and songs illustrate our recommendations for various movements and hand motions for the children. If you have children who are unable to participate in a particular movement due to a physical hindrance, feel free to adapt or create a more appropriate motion. We want all of the children to feel that they have contributed to the telling of the story.
Script & Songs

Because of young children’s short attention spans, we have kept the script to a short duration and songs to a minimum in quantity. All the songs and lines are simple and repetitive and lend themselves easily to the suggested actions. The script may be photocopied by the original purchaser rehearsal and performance purposes.

The CD

The CD contains everything you will need for the performance and rehearsals of the musical. You may find it helpful to copy practice tapes or CD’s to send home with the children. We have placed the demonstration of the performance at the end of the CD. You have permission to copy the demonstration performance onto practice cassettes or CD’s.

Please remember that copying the entire CD and/or resale of copies violates copyright laws. We do grant permission to the original purchaser to make copies of the demonstration performance from the CD for rehearsal use only.

The Mission

We encourage you to pray with the children as they learn their parts and songs. Pray for each other and for the people who will see and hear the program. Pray that the simplicity of God’s truths will speak loudly and clearly through the simplicity of the production and the children’s hearts.

We believe God uses children to bring His message of truth and love to people of all ages. This format provides an opportunity for children to enjoy God, learn more about Him, then share Him with others, passing the news of God’s marvelous works to other generations.
 Putting It All Together

Learning the Musical

To teach the script, we recommend that you treat it as the storytelling portion of your Bible lesson. Children enjoy and learn from repetition. Go through the story at least once per class, or if time doesn't allow, half the script per class. After the children have heard and said their parts for two or three classes, they may learn your lines as well!

We recommend that the songs be learned separately as the music portion of your lessons. As the children grow more familiar with the script and songs, begin weaving the songs into the script.

It is very helpful to make a cassette or CD practice copy of the songs and script for each child to have at home so that children can work on their parts during the week. Even if they only listen to the tape or CD in the car, it will reinforce the lines, songs and message. The demonstration performance on the teacher’s CD may be copied onto cassettes or CD’s for rehearsal use.

Words to Talk About

Before learning the script to “The Best Gift of All” we recommend that you talk about some of the words that are used in the script. As often as possible, we have used vocabulary that is appropriate for preschoolers. However, there is sometimes a term that doesn’t have an appropriate preschool synonym. You may need to explain this word to the children.

son: not like the sun in the sky, but like the boy in a family; a mother and daddy’s girls are daughters, their boys are sons

counselor: someone smart who can help you figure out what to do when you have problems

mighty: strong

everlasting: it lasts forever

As you go through the script with the children, encourage them to ask you about any other words they may not understand.

An Adult Helper

We recommend that you have a teacher/helper to serve as a prompter. He or she can say the children's lines with them during practice times, and can also do the actions.
If you have a large number of children, you may need two adult prompters. As the children become more familiar with the script and actions, the helper can simply mouth the words instead of actually saying them. This same approach can then be used during the performance, with the adult helper seated near the children where they can clearly see their cues and receive help.

You may prefer to be the prompter and let someone else be the storyteller. You may even wish to involve older students in the storytelling. But remember, once your roles are decided, rehearse the script the same way every time, and don’t make changes on the day of the performance. This will help the children feel comfortable and confident.

You know your children’s needs. If they are struggling to remember a certain part or action, have the prompters use cue card pictures or even sign language to help them remember.

**Blocking or Staging**

There is no need for complicated blocking or staging for the children. Simply make sure everyone can see and be seen. Using risers, steps or simple platforms can help keep all the children visible to the audience. When the actions include hopping up and down or any other movement, make sure the riser or area on which the children stand is secure.

**Costumes**

We recommend taking a very relaxed approach to costuming. Let the children wear their Sunday clothes or nice play clothes. You may add simple costumes pieces if you wish. Use only one item per child, such as a headband, apron or hat.

To represent a character or group of characters like soldiers, try to use a single item like a badge, sash or special headband.

No matter how you decide to dress the children, ALL children say all the children’s lines. This is a team effort in storytelling. We recommend that you not assign lines to “solo” children. The focus is the telling of the story. We want all the children to learn that they have the ability to share stories from God’s Word.

Here are some ideas you may wish to use.

- Birthday party clothes (See Theme 2 suggestion in the Sets and Props section.)

**Sets and Props**

If you are going to decorate your stage area for the performance of “To Us a Child is Born” take a very simple, general approach. Here are some ideas you may wish to use. There are two different themes you could use. Choose one of two themes (or both):
Theme 1 – Time:
• Help children make clocks of paper plates and hang them around on the walls.
• Hang a variety of calendars among the clocks.
• Bring a variety of real clocks (fairly large ones) to set here and there on stage.

• Option (in place of or in addition to the above ideas): Make one large “calendar” out of a flip chart or poster boards. Place the calendar on an easel, low table, or on the stage floor. The top page of the calendar should be blank, or decorated like the cover of a calendar. On the other pages, using a large, dark marker, write the following dates (in bold):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>730 B.C.</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>650 B.C.</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>550 B.C.</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES!</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the performance, when the teacher reads “Micah,” have an adult helper or child flip to the second page. When the teacher reads “Isaiah,” flip to the third page. Flip to the fourth page when “Jeremiah” is read. After the teacher reads, “Did God keep his promise?” flip to fifth page as children say, “Yes!”

Theme 2 – Jesus’ Birth
• Make a manger out of a large box or basket. Stuff it full of gold streamers that overhang the edge like hay. Set large stuffed “stable” animals around the manger.
• Hang a “Happy Birthday” banner, balloons and streamers around the set, decorating as for a birthday party.

These are simple ideas that help children use their imagination, and help to reinforce the story. The focus is the story, not the set, costumes, and props.
Dear Parents,

Your children are learning a short musical *The Best Gift of All*. To help reinforce the songs and actions, we have prepared each family a rehearsal tape.

Please encourage your child to listen to his tape during the week. We want to give the children every opportunity to learn the Bible story. We hope you enjoy letting your child teach you the actions to the script and songs.

Thank you for your help.

**A Little Town**  
by Karyn Henley

Bethlehem, you’re a little town,  
Little town, little town.  
Bethlehem, you’re a little town,  
That’s what the people sing.

Bethlehem, you’re a little town,  
Little town, little town.  
Bethlehem, you’re a little town,  
But you’ll give us a king.

And that’s a very good thing.  
Yes! That’s a very good thing.

**Emmanuel, Emmanuel**  
by Karyn Henley

Emmanuel, Emmanuel,  
Who is our Emmanuel?  
God with us!  
God with us!

God always keeps his promise,  
And he promised us Emmanuel.  
Wait and see.  
Wait and see.  
Wonderful, and Counselor,  
Mighty God forever.  
Prince of Peace!  
Prince of Peace!

God always keeps his promise,  
And he promised us Emmanuel.  
Wait and see.  
Wait and see.

**Time is Coming**  
by Karyn Henley

Tick, tock, tick, tock,  
Time is coming.  
Tick, tock, tick, tock,  
time is coming.  
Tick, tock, tick, tock,  
Time is coming.  
We will have a king.

Tick, tock, tick, tock,  
Hearts are humming.  
Tick, tock, tick, tock,  
Hearts are humming.  
Tick, tock, tick, tock.  
Hearts are humming.  
We will have a king.

When will he come?  
Who will he be?  
We will have to wait and see.

Repeat verses 1 and 2

**To Us a Child is Born**  
by Karyn Henley

To us a child is born.  
To us a Son is given.  
To us a child is born.  
Jesus, Jesus, God’s own Son.

(repeat)

Oh, how God must love you.  
Oh, how God must love me.  
Oh, how God must love us all  
To give his only Son.

Repeat verse 1, holding out last three notes.
To Us A Child is Born

Teacher
This is a true story.

Children
It really happened.
(Nod on "really" and "happened.")

Teacher
Long ago and far away there lived a man named Micah.
God said, "Listen, Micah."

Children
"Listen! Listen!"
(Cup hands around ears.)

Teacher
God said, "Oh, Bethlehem, you are just a little town."

Children
A little town.
(Hands in front, one above the other a few inches apart.)

Teacher
"But a king will come from you.
All over the world, people will say good things about this king.
He will bring peace."

Children
God promised. (Shake pointer finger.)

Teacher
But when will he come?

Children
(Hands palm up at shoulders in a shrug.)
When will he come?
Who will he be?
We will have to wait and see.

Song: A Little Town

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A Little Town

Words and Music by Karyn Henley

\[ \text{\large \#100} \]

\[ \text{C} \quad \text{Am} \quad \text{F} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{Am} \quad \text{F} \quad \text{G} \]

Bethlehem, you're a little town,
Bethlehem, you're a little town,

\[ \text{F} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{C} \quad \text{Am} \quad \text{F} \quad \text{G} \]

little town, little town.
little town, little town.

\[ \text{F} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{[1. C]} \quad [2. C] \quad \text{F} \quad \text{G} \]

Little town, little town. Bethlehem, you're a little town.
That's little town, little town. Bethlehem, you're a little town. But

what the people say.
what the people say.

[1. C] \quad [2. C] \quad \text{F} \quad \text{G} \]

And that's a very good thing.
And that's a very good thing.

2. (make crown) (shake index finger)

thing.
thing.

[C] \quad r\text{it} \quad \text{F} \quad \text{G} \quad \text{C}

Yes, that's a very good thing.
Yes, that's a very good thing.
To Us A Child is Born

Teacher
Long ago and far away there lived a man named Isaiah.
God said, “Listen, Isaiah.”

Children
“Listen! Listen!”
(Cup hands around ears.)

Teacher
God said, “A young woman will have a son, a baby boy!”

Children
A baby boy!
(Pretend to rock a baby.)

Teacher
He will be Emmanuel, which means, ‘God with us.’

Children
God with us.
(Hug self.)

Teacher
God told Isaiah another part of the promise:
“To us a child is born.
To us a Son is given.
He will be called Wonderful.”

Children
Wonderful! (Arms up and out.)

Teacher
Counselor!

Children
Counselor! (Point to head.)

Teacher
Mighty God!

Children
Mighty God!
(Make muscle arms.)
To Us A Child is Born

Teacher
Everlasting Father!

Children
Everlasting Father!
(Arms extended straight out sideways.)

Teacher
Prince of Peace!

Children
Prince of Peace!
(Hands crossed over heart.)

Teacher
But when will he come?

Children
(Hands palm up at shoulders in a shrug.)
When will he come?
Who will he be?
We will have to wait and see.

Song: Emmanuel, Emmanuel
Emmanuel, Emmanuel

Words and Music by Karyn Henley

1. Em - man - u - el, Em-man-u-el. Who is our Em-man-u-el?
2. Won-der-ful, & Coun-sel-or, migh-ty God for e - ver.

God with us! God with us! God al-ways keeps his pro-mise, & he pro-mised us Em-man-u-el.

Prince of Peace! Prince of Peace!

point up cross over heart wag finger

Wait and see. Wait and see. Wait and see. Wait and see!

“shrug”

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Activities
Arts and Crafts

Hand Print Wreath

Materials
- large white paper plates
- washable liquid preschool paint, a variety of colors (see less messy option below)
- paper towels
- baby wipes or hand wipes
- old newspapers or plastic tablecloth
- old shirts or smocks

Prepare ahead of time
Cover tables with old newspapers or plastic tablecloths.

Guide Each Child to
1. Take a paper plate and put on an old shirt or smock.
2. Set out several extra paper plates and pour enough paint on the extra plates to just cover the bottom.
3. Help the child press one hand onto paint, then press the hand onto his paper plate, making a circle around the outer edge with their handprints.
4. As soon as the child has completed a circle of handprints on his plate, wipe his hand off with a paper towel and ask him to clean his hand with a wipe.
5. Send these home as Christmas gifts for the children’s parents or grandparents.

Option: You can trace around each child’s hand on colored construction paper, then cut out several handprints and let the child glue his handprints onto the paper plates in a circle. This is more time-intensive for teachers, but less messy for children.

Things to Talk About
1. Is it Christmastime yet? Will we have to wait for Christmas to come?
2. Has anyone ever told you to “be patient.” What does that mean?
3. Being patient means waiting without fussing or whining. Sometimes it helps to find other things to do while we’re waiting. What can you do while you’re waiting for Christmas to come? (Suggest helping Mom and Dad, making Christmas cards, etc.)
Scripture Memory

“To us a child is born, to us a son is given…he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

Speed Motions

Materials
• none

Guide Each Child to
Say the verse, going through the hand motions you use in the musical:
 • Wonderful! (Arms up and out.)
 • Counselor! (Point to head.)
 • Mighty God! (Make muscle arms.)
 • Everlasting Father! (Arms extended straight out sideways.)
 • Prince of Peace! (Hands crossed over heart.)

Start slowly. After saying it with motions a couple of times slowly, ask the children if they think they can do it faster. Try it with them a bit faster. Ask them if they can do it faster. Try it a bit faster. Keep speeding up each time until you are going so fast, you can hardly do it. Children usually end up laughing.

Things to Talk About
1. What does “wonderful” mean?
2. What is a counselor? (someone who helps you decide what to do)
3. What does it mean for God to be “mighty”?
4. What does “everlasting” mean? (such a long time, it never ends)
5. What is “peace”? (calm, restful, not worried or upset)
6. Who is our Wonderful Counselor, our Mighty God, our Everlasting Father, our Prince of Peace?
Scripture Memory

“To us a child is born, to us a son is given…he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6

Hop the Path

Materials
• masking tape
• five large index cards
• a black marker

Prepare ahead of time
On each index card, write one letter: W, C, M, E, and P. On the floor, make a hopping path, like a sidewalk, of five squares with masking tape. Inside each square, tape down all sides of one of the marked index cards in the order listed above.

Guide Each Child to
1. Notice the letters in the squares. Ask children what sound each letter makes. Tell them that the letters are for words that start with those sounds: Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
2. Ask the children to take turns jumping with both feet into each square in turn. As the child hops in the W square, everyone says, “Wonderful!” Next the child hops into the C square, and everyone says, “Counselor!” Continue along the path.
3. To make it more fun, or faster, divide the children into pairs (or even three or more children). The pair holds hands and jumps together into each square in turn.

Things to Talk About
1. What does “wonderful” mean?
2. What is a counselor? (someone who helps you decide what to do)
3. What does it mean for God to be “mighty”?
4. What does “everlasting” mean? (such a long time, it never ends)
5. What is “peace”? (calm, restful, not worried or upset)
6. Who is our Wonderful Counselor, our Mighty God, our Everlasting Father, our Prince of Peace?
Science

Empty and Full

Materials
• a copy for each child of the inn picture below
• crayons or markers

Guide Each Child to
1. Listen as you point out that this is an inn, a hotel, in the town of Bethlehem. Ask them if the inn is empty or full.
2. Ask them to make a full inn, to draw a face of someone looking out each window.

Things to Talk About
1. When Mary and Joseph got to the inn, what did the innkeeper tell them?
2. Has your house ever been full of people?
3. Where did Mary and Joseph have to stay?
Science

Sound Waves

Materials
• a few grains of uncooked rice
• a penny
• a bowl of water
• several strings about two feet long
• several old metal keys

Prepare ahead of time
Thread the strings through the keys. Do not tie the ends of the string.

Guide Each Child to
1. Gather around the bowl of water.
2. Ask them to watch the water closely as you drop a grain of uncooked rice into it. Point out the ripples in the water. Drop the penny in. Point out the ripples. Tell the children that sounds send out rippling waves in the air. We can’t see the waves, but they hit our ear drums, and we hear them.
3. Ask the children to cover their ears with their hands. Bump one of the keys onto a table or chair. Ask what they hear. The sound waves can’t get to their ears very well.
4. Now give several children a key with string through it. Ask them to hold one end of the string in one ear and the other end in the other ear. Ask a friend to bump the key onto the edge of a table or chair. Ask what they hear. The sound waves traveled through the string and went right to their ears. The sound was louder.
5. Let all the children have a turn with the string.

Things to Talk About
1. What are some sounds we hear at Christmastime? (bells ringing, Christmas carols, sounds of cooking in the kitchen, laughing, sounds of gift-wrapping, etc.)
2. What sounds do you think Mary and Joseph heard in the stable?
3. What sound might a newborn baby make?
4. Who is the baby God promised to send?
5. Did God keep his promise?
Games

Angel Dot-to-Dot

Materials
• one copy for each child of the Angel Dot-to-Dot (below)
• crayons

Guide Each Child to
1. Take a copy of the Angel Dot-to-Dot.
2. Show the children how to draw lines to connect the dots.

Things to Talk About
1. What did you make when you connected all the dots?
2. What did the angel tell Mary?
3. Did Mary get the baby right away, or did she have to wait?
4. Did God keep his promise?