

Peace On Earth
Christmas Program



This program affords all classes the opportunity to participate with representatives of each class remaining on the altar, to form the Nativity scene. This program also affords flexibility in how to adapt the directives. The singing is intended for congregational participation.

Good evening! Welcome to our celebration of the mysteries of this sacred season. This evening's program is our Christmas gift to you. This year in a special way we focus on the Angels' message of Peace at the birth of Jesus. We invite you to reflect on this, and join us in singing the hymns during the program.

Voice 1: **Mary!** The first to believe in Jesus! The first to make a place for Him in the world! Who better than Mary to guide us in our waiting, as we long for the peace which was the message of the first Christmas ...

Voice 2: ... as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth ... as we prepare for the feast of Mary, the Mother of God.

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

(Beginning with the youngest grades, students participating in the Nativity Scene will process up the middle aisle to reserved pews. Mary will follow and take her place on the altar.)

Voice 1: **Mary!** The first to hear the good News of the coming of Our Savior, ending the waiting of the Old Testament people, and fulfilling the longing and anticipation of generations of Israelites. Mary! The new Eve!

Voice 2: **Mary!** Our Mother-- our model, our advocate! We pray to Mary, who has always been our mediator during the centuries since the birth of Jesus. Tonight we celebrate Mary, as we reflect on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary. We ask her to continue interceding for us during these unsettled times, that our hearts will be united with *hers* in seeking peace and openness to the love that Her Son has to offer.

“Come Lord Jesus”

(5th graders will place Jesse Tree Symbols on tree)

The First Joyful Mystery – The Annunciation

(Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David and the Angel Gabriel slowly approach the altar. Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and David take their places on the far sides of the altar. The Angel Gabriel stands by the lectern.)

Voice 1: For thousands of years before the Angel's pronouncement to Mary, the people waited.

Voice 2: Noah waited - Abraham waited - Joseph waited - Moses and David waited ... the whole world waited.

Voice 1: It was not always a peaceful world. The people did not always listen to God. Sometimes God sent them reminders of their need to turn back to Him.

Voice 2: God always protected those who were faithful to Him. He rewarded Abraham's faith. He sheltered Noah and his family from the great flood. He saved Joseph from the plots of his brothers. He protected Moses and the Israelites from Pharaoh's army. He protected David from Goliath. He protected them all because they were obedient and faithful to Him.

(Pre-K and K participants approach Nativity Scene with stuffed animals, followed by Noah. They take their places on the altar, as the animals at the stable.)

“O Come All Ye Faithful”

Voice 1: Mary was faithful to God. God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth to make the greatest pronouncement that was ever made – the long awaited Savior was coming! Mary was to be the mother of Him for whom the whole world had waited.

Voice 2: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke ...

"The angel Gabriel was sent from God to the town of Nazareth, to a Virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, who was of the house and lineage of David. The woman's name was **MARY**. The angel greeted her, saying:"

“Hail Mary”

(Elizabeth approaches – waits at bottom step)



The Second Joyful Mystery – The Visitation

Voice 1: St. Luke tells us that Mary went “in haste” to visit someone in need – her cousin, Elizabeth, who was much older than Mary. She, too, was to have a child. Mary gave us a beautiful example of outreach to others.

Voice 2: This was the same kindness that Mary extended to all – at the wedding feast of Cana, at the foot of the Cross, and through the many visits she has made to humankind through past centuries. Each time she has modeled for us a mother's love. She calls us to reach out to others – to all those in need, to the materially and spiritually poor, to the lonely, the confused, and the abandoned.

Voice 1: It is our hope, that just as Mary recognized God's great love to all, we may one day proclaim with her:

“My Soul Doth Glory In Your Love, O Lord”

(Mary and Elizabeth quietly and slowly leave.)

The Third Joyful Mystery – The Birth of Jesus

Voice 1: The time came when the words of the prophets would be fulfilled through Mary.

Voice 2: “Behold, the Virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name Him Emmanuel!”

Voice 1: Mary and Joseph, models of trust and obedience, set out for Bethlehem in accordance with the decree that all must be registered in their own town. It was not easy for Mary, as she was about to have her Child. The journey would be long and difficult; however, she knew it was God's will and thus she obeyed.

Voice 2: Mary models for us how to look beyond our own weariness and those things that would tempt us to neglect our obligations. She teaches us how to become more open to the will of God.

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

(As people journeying to Bethlehem, 1st grade participants advance to the altar.

Mary and Joseph follow, and take their places in front of the altar.)

Voice 1: When they arrived in Bethlehem, the only available lodging was a stable, a place usually reserved for animals. *(The Pre-K and K participants with stuffed animals move closer.)*

Voice 2: While they were there, the time came for Mary's Child to be born. In the midst of this humble place, Mary took her baby, wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger.

Voice 1: Mary teaches us to focus on what is really important in life and to set aside the mundane. By focusing on the event of her Son's birth, Mary serenely gave us the answer in Bethlehem!

“What Child is This?”

Voice 1: Now there were shepherds living in the field and keeping night watch on their flock. The Angel of the Lord appeared to them and said: "*Fear not! I proclaim to you Good News of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a Savior has been born for you, who is Messiah and Lord.*"

Voice 2: The angel's command to the shepherds that they trust in God's promise is the same message of trust portrayed by Mary in the Scriptures ... "Do whatever He tells you!" She tells us to put ourselves in Jesus' hands, for it is only when we trust, that we can really know Jesus as the promised Messiah.

“The First Noel”

“Go Tell It On The Mountain”
(3rd grade shepherds approach the altar.)

Voice 1: Suddenly, there was in the heavens a myriad of angels praising God and singing.

Voice 2: Peace! The message of the first Christmas! This has always been Mary's plea, as she has spoken to us through the centuries. How can we be peacemakers in our families, in our neighborhoods, in our world?



“Gloria” (Refrain)
(4th grade angels approach the altar.)

“Angels We Have Heard on High”
(2nd grade participants carrying stars aloft approach the altar.
Child with largest star stands behind group at altar.)

Voice 1: Legend tells us that there were many stars in the sky that night. The Gospel of Matthew tells us that the brightness of one star led the Magi to the place where the Holy Family dwelt. These wise men recognized in the Holy Family something more than outward appearances. They recognized the goodness that was within, the simplicity of the surroundings, and the humble acceptance of the gifts of the Magi.

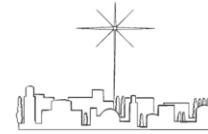
Voice 2: Mary leads us to a life of humility, simplicity and truth. Can we accept with humility and truth the wondrous gift which God has given us through the Incarnation of His Son? Do we recognize the gifts and talents that God has given us? Do we use these gifts for good?

“We Three Kings”
(6th grade Kings process to the altar.
The Kings lay their gifts at the feet of the Holy Family, and move reverently to the side.)

Voice 1: Throughout the centuries, many have come in adoration before the King of heaven and earth. The saints who followed Mary's example have shown us how to approach this holy season, and make this unsettled world a better place.

Voice 2: Our focus on the Nativity scene would be incomplete without a focus on **St. Joseph**, patron of all workers, who in his own quiet, humble way responded to challenges and rejection. We honor those whose lives, like Joseph's, were suddenly changed at the hands of others. May we, like Joseph, respond with peace and humility when we are faced with difficulties.

"O Holy Night"



The Fourth Joyful Mystery – The Presentation of Jesus

Voice 1: Reflecting on this mystery of the Presentation, we focus on the obedience and trust of Mary and Joseph, as they present Jesus in the temple.

Voice 2: We ask the intercession of Mary and Joseph in healing our world of sin and division, and in bringing the peace we so desperately seek.

"Silent Night"

The Fifth Joyful Mystery – The Finding of Jesus

Voice 1: Where might **We** find Jesus? We find Him:

... In the poor, the lonely and the downtrodden

... In those who have been the victims of terrorism

... In our hearts, renewed and inspired by the children here

... In the kindnesses extended to us by others

... In celebrations of our Faith, which lead us to Him

Voice 2: Now, as we approach our world with renewed faith, trust, and love, we look to Mary to be our model and guide. "Does a mother ever forget her child?" The Book of Isaiah firmly answers this question: "NEVER!" Mary has shown us she has never forgotten us and will never do so. We need to turn to Son and to Mother – to HIM through her. It is then and only then that we will have true "Joy to the World."



"Joy To The World"

As indicated in the program, certain parts are represented by specified grades. Our 7th and 8th graders honor our program by filling the roles of major characters, readers, and ushers.