

Theme: Advent/Christmas

Objective

To experience the Christmas story through song and movement

Overview

In this event, families gather to focus on the birth of Jesus through the singing and acting out of traditional Christmas songs. Groups of families will be assigned a Christmas song, prepare the presentation of the song using props, drama, etc., and lead the large group in song while acting it out. The event will close with singing of Happy Birthday to Jesus, and sharing of cake and refreshments.

EVENT PLAN

Prior to Family Faith Event

1. Invite all families with kindergarteners to register.
2. Choose a location that has a large enough meeting space for your group, with space for small groups to plan their part of the evening festivities, and a stage area for the song dramatizations.
3. Decorate the gathering space for Christmas, including a Christmas tree, crèche, and other symbols of the season.
4. Gather dress-up or costume options, materials for make-shift props, and art supplies for the families to use in presenting their songs. Remember, this is not a Hollywood production; kindergarteners are very creative and they love to play dress-up. Try not to give in to the temptation to provide “ready-made” costumes and props. Part of the fun of this event is in the planning and creating that the family groups will do together to present their songs.
5. Create a workshop area in the event space for costume creation, art, and props.
6. Make song booklets that contain the lyrics for the Christmas songs you have chosen. We recommend songs that provide ample opportunity for dress-up and simple scene setting props. Our suggestions include:
 - Away in a Manger
 - The First Noel
 - We Three Kings of Orient Are
 - Little Town of Bethlehem
 - The Friendly Beasts
 - Little Drummer Boy

Day of the Event

Welcome

1. Welcome the participants and families as they arrive. Have Christmas music playing in the background.
2. Invite all to gather in their family groups; a carpeted floor is best. Have a spontaneous dialogue with the children in the group by asking them about the decorations in the room, and what we celebrate at Christmas time (the birth of Jesus!).
3. Introduce the evening by sharing that participants will experience the story of Christmas through song.
4. Invite families to introduce themselves to one or two other families by sharing about their family’s favorite Christmas songs or carols.
5. Have each family introduce themselves to the large group by telling what one or two of their favorite carols are. Meanwhile, develop a list in the front of the room of the “favorites.”

Event Activity

1. Ask the families to join with one or two other families. They will work together as small groups for this activity. Their first assignment is to spend several minutes brainstorming all of the main characters and symbols they can think of that are a part of the story of Jesus’ birth.

2. From the family groups' brainstorming, the large group will develop a comprehensive list of the main people and symbols in the Christmas story (e.g., baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels, donkey, cows, sheep, three magi, star, manger or crèche).
3. Next, if necessary, add the Christmas songs listed above to the "all time favorites" list the group developed in the introductory activity.
4. Distribute the song booklets to the participants.
5. Assign one of the songs in the booklet to each small group. (Make sure several people in the small group are familiar with the song!) Explain that the small group's task is to bring their song to life by dramatizing it. They will then lead the whole group in singing the Christmas carol they have been assigned.
6. Point out the "workshop" area where groups can create costumes and props for their song. Emphasize that this is not a "professional" production, and that participants can be as creative as they'd like in working with the available materials to make their songs come to life. (Gently remind the adults in the crowd to find the balance between letting the children share their own ideas about costumes, props, scene setting, and actions while providing enough structure and guidance to complete the activity in a timely fashion.) Allow 20 to 30 minutes for the groups to prepare.
7. Invite each of the family groups to present their song-skit to the large group. Remember to have all participants join in singing the Christmas carol after its dramatic presentation.

Concluding Prayer Activity

1. After each group has presented their song, invite volunteers from each of the groups to create a "live" manger scene in the center of the room, or in front of the Christmas tree if you have one. Include all of the various characters involved in the Christmas story—shepherds, Mary, Joseph, animals, baby Jesus, angels, three wise men, etc. Have the other participants gather around in a circle and join hands.
2. Conclude with a simple Christmas blessing, and by singing Happy Birthday to Jesus.

Refreshments

1. Refer participants to [insert link to rclbenziger.com > Stories of God > Kindergarten > Online Resources > Parents and Families] where they will find a blessing for their family crèche.
2. Play Christmas music in the background as families share a "Happy Birthday Jesus" cake, Christmas cookies, hot apple cider, and hot cocoa.

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Christmas decorations for the meeting area
- Props to use for the manger, star, and other symbols, and "dress-up" clothes to create costumes for angels, shepherds, Mary and Joseph, and the wise men. (Items such as shawls, bathrobes, small pieces of cloth with twine for shepherd headgear, etc., all work well. Children are great improvisers; avoid giving them "ready-made" costumes to wear.)
- Refreshments (birthday cake with the words "Happy Birthday Jesus" written on it.)
- Christmas song booklets
- Christmas recordings and player