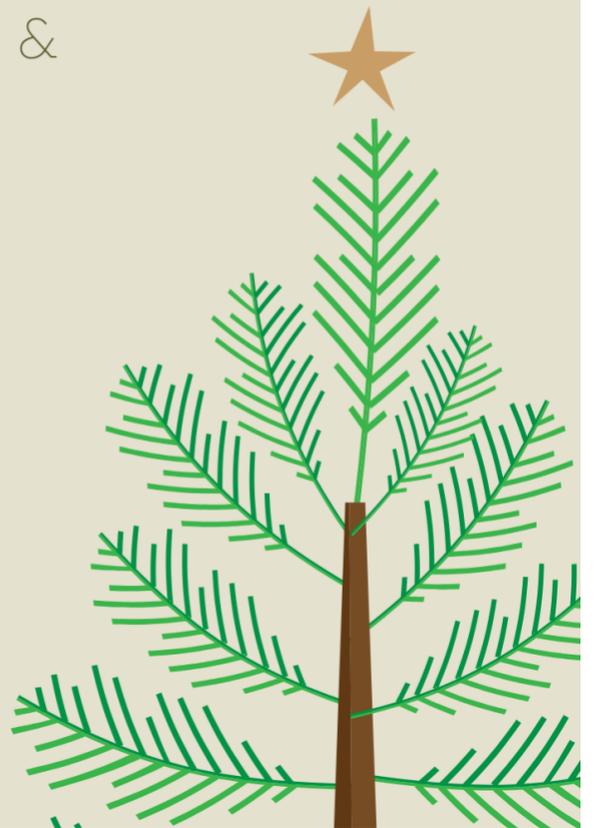


**GOD
WITH
US**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS &
NATIVITY PROGRAM
ADVENT 2020



How to Host a Happy Birthday Jesus Party

1. Invitations

- Make an evite or paperless post OR make invitations on a fun Christmas stationary to hand deliver to neighbors or to mail.
- Since this is a birthday party for Jesus, you can ask for each family to bring a gift for “the least of these.” Consider a [PCPC Urban Ministry partner](#) for donations. Or, consider making Christmas cards for a local homeless shelter or nursing home.
 - The idea here is to teach the kids to think of those less fortunate than themselves at Christmas.

2. Opening Activity

Plan: This is something everyone can easily join in on as they arrive. Budget for about 15 minutes.

- Color a picture of a [candy cane](#), [a Christmas tree](#), or [the Nativity](#).
- Decorate a Christmas cookie to eat later.
- Make a popcorn garland to use for a child or family’s Christmas tree. Intersperse the words Happy Birthday Jesus on the garland with cut out letters you make ahead of time.

3. Story Time (15-20 minutes)

Plan for a story time of 15-20 minutes. See page 8 for the Script.

- In the weeks leading up to the party, you should:
 1. Gather costumes for each of the characters from the story of the birth of Jesus (below).
 2. Separate out simple costumes for each character made from old sheets or fabric, garland, twine, cheap fabric (burlap sacks), etc. and place into large Ziploc bags.
 3. Label each bag for the characters (Mary, Joseph, etc.). Be sure to include the animal parts.
 4. **Or**, ask each attendee to come dressed like a man or woman from the Bible in Jesus day. You can assign parts when they get there or ahead of time.
 5. Gather props: cradle for the manger, a baby doll, stuffed sheep and barnyard animals, and a few crowns ([paper ones from Target](#) or [Do-It-Yourself](#)).
 6. Make a copy of the script (below) for each parent attending. This is super helpful as you will need lots of stagehands to help direct.

- Day of party:
 1. Assign parts and have parents assist the children with their costumes. As you read the story from the Bible have each character assume their place in the play. You can even have each child repeat their lines as you read them off!
 2. Be sure to get a group picture and use it for follow-up. You might send each child a copy of the picture and thank them for attending.
 3. If you choose not to act out a live Nativity, then choose the Christmas story from the Bible, or a version you like.

4. Craft

Plan your craft for about 15 minutes. Instructions on each of these crafts are at the end of this document. Pick and choose from the items below.

- Make a Saint Nicholas apple (Instructions below);
- Sew a Candy Cane card (Instructions below);
- Decorate cookies for Advent Cookie Calendar (Instructions below).
- Make Candy Cane Christmas cards for the children to give away to children in the hospital or a neighbor. They can make “Jesus is the reason for the season!” and you can use a Candy Cane for the “J”. If they are younger, have a verse already printed out for them to color on the inside of the card. If they are older, let them copy the verse themselves.
- Make jingle bell wreaths with satin ribbon strung through 10-12 bells and tied into a bow. They can hang them on their doors or wear as bracelets.

5. Happy Birthday Cake for Jesus

Plan for the birthday cake portion to take about 10 minutes or so. Use the ideas below to help for this fun time.

- Make or purchase a cake of your choice or cupcakes (especially since that can be cleaner and easier given public health concerns). Other ideas:
 - Make a cake in a festive shape like a star if possible. Or,
 - Make a 5 layer cake with each layer being a color of the [Wordless Gospel](#). Cut the cake and serve. While they eat share what each layer represents.
- Sing “Happy Birthday, Jesus” before cutting the cake. Consider having boxed juices or mini-water bottles for kids, and bottled waters for parents.
- Have a special chair or table where the kids can place their gifts that they made or brought for “the least of these.” Consider letting families know what organization will be receiving their gifts.
- Remind each child to take some time on Christmas day to thank Jesus for coming to earth to die for our sins. You could make a copy of the Christmas story script to take home and read with their family on Christmas Day!

6. Party Favors

- Have a gift bag with a copy of the Christmas Story typed out for them to read on Christmas Day. Pick and choose from such items as:
 - A tiny manger scene. (Ex., [Dollar General](#))
 - Little ornaments that they can color to decorate their trees at home. (Ex., [Oriental Trading Company](#) or [Jesus Storybook Bible ornament ideas](#) or [Jesse Tree Ornaments](#)).
 - Rice Krispie treats with green food coloring and red hot's into Christmas balls or [Christmas wreaths](#).
 - A Christmas coloring book.
 - A [jingle bell wreath](#) for their door handles or to wear as a bracelet. Teach them to say a special thanks to Jesus for coming as our Savior every time they hear them ring!
 - A candy cane with the Christmas story typed out and attached with a ribbon (see [pcpc.org/advent](#) or [pcpc.org/kids](#) to find the candy cane symbol pamphlet).

7. Go Christmas Caroling!

- Use the PCPC Kids Advent 2020 Hymnal (see [pcpc.org/advent](#) or [pcpc.org/kids](#)) to visit and sing to neighbors and friends. Pick and choose the different songs in the hymnal.

Craft Ideas for Happy Birthday Jesus Party

Candy Cane Christmas Cards

1. Take a piece of red or green construction paper and fold it into a card shape.
2. On the outside take cotton balls or white pom poms and glue them in shape of a candy cane with a little bit of space in between each.
3. In the spaces punch two holes side by side.
4. Take red yarn or ribbon and lace through the holes to make the red stripes on the candy cane.
5. On the inside of the card put the story of the Christmas story typed out.
6. Attach a red ribbon to the top of the card.

Santa Apples

1. Take one apple, shined with Crisco, for Santa's body. Place it upside-down on waxed paper.

2. Stick 3 or 4 cranberries on toothpicks for the legs and arms. (Allow the arms to angle in a slight "V" and the legs to come a bit forward.)
3. Place one toothpick in the back as a prop to help Santa stand.
4. Use whole fresh cloves for Santa's eye's, nose, mouth and the buttons down the front of his suit.
5. Attach cotton with glue for Santa's beard, coming to a point.
6. Create Santa's head from one large marshmallow, and his hat from one cranberry. (This Santa is for looking, not eating!)

Advent Cookie Calendar

1. Purchase either pre-packaged cookie dough or make your own. Sugar cookie dough is recommended.
2. Use cookie cutters that would enable you to share a biblical truth about Christmas. Suggestions: [18 piece Wilton at Target](#)
3. Place each cookie in a small plastic bag, print off or write in an explanation and verse (see below) and place in bag, and tie it shut with a four-inch strand of slim red ribbon or yarn.
4. Place the cookie bags in a Christmas basket or put them in a place to access easily.
5. Each day in Advent open the designated cookie, read how the cookie shape relates to Advent along with Scripture reference.
6. On Christmas Day, enjoy the big cookie with the whole family!

Advent Cookie Calendar Scripture Idea & Reference

Date	Cookie Cutter Shape or Pattern	Scripture Idea and Reference
29-Nov	Star	The star led the wisemen to baby Jesus. (Matthew 2:1-2)
30-Nov	Sheep	Sheep were likely in the stable where Jesus was born. (Luke 2:6-7)
1-Dec	Wreath	The circle represents God's unending love for us. (Romans 5:8)

2-Dec	Candy Cane	Turn it upside down and it is a shepherd's crook or staff. Jesus is the Great Shepherd. (John 10:11, 14-15)
3-Dec	Snowflake	Each snowflake is unique, no two are alike. God makes each person the same way -- no two people are alike -- and God loves us just as much! (Ps. 139:13-14)
4-Dec	Mitten	God has the whole world – you and me – in His hands! God gives us eternal life through Jesus and nothing can separate us or take us out of His hands. (John 10:28; Romans 8:38-39)
5-Dec	Angel	An angel visited Mary and Joseph to tell them about Jesus' birth. (Luke 1:26-38)
6-Dec	Gift/Present	Jesus is the gift God gives to the world. He shows His great love for us by sending His only Son, Jesus. (John 3:16)
7-Dec	Bell	Bells, when rung, tell us someone is coming or something is happening. God sent the prophets in the Old Testament that Someone was coming to rescue the world from sin and sorrow – it was Jesus! (Isa. 9:6)
8-Dec	Ornament	Ornaments make a tree look lovely and pretty. The Bible tells us Jesus was not a pretty man, and he was despised. Jesus endured suffering and pain, so He could rescue us! (Isa. 53)
9-Dec	Light Bulb	Jesus is the light of the world! (John 8:12)
10-Dec	Christmas Tree	Trees can remind us of the wood that made the manger Jesus slept in or the stable that was over his head. And the Cross on which Jesus died to show us how much God loved us. (John 3:16)
11-Dec	Star	Jesus is the Bright and Morning Star. (Rev. 22:16)
12-Dec	Sheep	Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)
13-Dec	Gingerbread Man	Jesus came to save all people from their sins! But to do that, He had to become a human too! (John 1:11-16)

14-Dec	Candy Cane	Turn it upside down and it is a "J" for Jesus. (Matthew 1:21)
15-Dec	Snowflake	Snow is white! Because of Jesus our sins will be removed and we become pure as the driven snow! (Isa. 1:18)
16-Dec	Mitten	God made everything in the world. All of Creation glorifies God! In Christ all things are being reconciled, or made right, with God. (Col. 1:15-22)
17-Dec	Angel	An angel came to the shepherds keeping their flocks by night to tell them about the newborn King. (Luke 2:8-20)
18-Dec	Gift/Present	Jesus was promised Savior (gift) from long ago who was going to redeem all the things sin, death, and Satan ruined. (Gen. 3:15)
19-Dec	Bell	Bells, when rung, tell us someone is coming or something is happening. God sent the prophets in the Old Testament that Someone was coming to rescue the world from sin and sorrow – it was Jesus! (Isa. 11:1-5)
20-Dec	Gingerbread Man	Jesus became a human just like you and me, he had skin, blood, hair, eyes and more! He had emotions too! But He was without sin. (1 John 4:2)
21-Dec	Light Bulb	God is light, and to have fellowship with Him, a person must walk in the light! (1 John 1:5-10)
22-Dec	Christmas Tree	Christmas trees are fun to decorate, but eventually we take them down to either store away or put by the road. Jesus never goes away though! He came to be with us for forever! (Deut. 31:8; Matt. 28:20)
23-Dec	Gift/Present	The Wise Men brought precious gifts to Jesus: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Matthew 2:9-11)
24-Dec	Wreath	Most wreaths are green, which can represent life. Jesus comes to give us eternal life. (John 10:10)
25-Dec	Big Cookie!	Read the Nativity Story from Luke 2 and share the cookie together!

Nativity Script

Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-12; Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20

Introduction

This script combines the Luke's and Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus. Below you'll see the speaking roles you'll need along with just actors. The Narrator, highlighted in green, speaks unless there is a highlighted yellow name, then that actor speaks the line. The play can seem disjointed, but that's okay! Most of actors probably have not had time to rehearse. If you finish the play quickly, switch up kids that play the roles to let others have a turn. Repetition, repetition, repetition!

Speaking Roles

- Narrator
- Joseph
- Mary
- Angel Gabriel
- An Angel of the Lord
- Centurion
- King Herod
- Wiseman #1
- Lead Chief Priest

Other parts and roles

- Townspeople
- Soldiers
- Shepherds
- Host of Angels
- Wisemen
- Innkeeper

The Beginning

(Narrator) God would save the world through a baby, but not just any baby. It's an exciting story and I'm here to tell you what happened that special night long ago. Many people have tried to tell the story of what God has done. They wrote what they had been told by the people who were there in the beginning and saw what happened. Doctor Luke happens to one of those people to hear about the story. He made a careful study of everything, like all doctors do, and then decided to write down exactly what took place so others could know.

A young woman named Mary (Mary & Joseph off to stage right; Mary moves to the front of the stage with Joseph with a ring) was engaged to Joseph from King David's family.

King David was the best king Israel had ever had, but David, like all humanity, messed up a lot. Since Joseph was from the family of King David that meant Joseph was royalty. Anyone in Joseph's family was royalty too. God promised long ago that a future King would come from David's family that would be a whole lot better than David. And for a very, very long time the people of Israel waited for this King that was better than David.

Before Joseph and Mary were married, Mary learned in an unexpected way that she was pregnant. A co-worker of mine, Gabriel, delivered the news. To say she was speechless would be an understatement. To think she was not even married yet, but she was already pregnant? Wow!

The angel Gabriel (meets with Mary center stage) went to visit Mary in the small town of Nazareth in Galilee.

Gabriel said to her, *"You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you."*

(Narrator) As you can imagine Mary was confused (Mary shows a confused face). Not only by the sudden appearance of an angel, but she didn't know what my words meant.

Gabriel explained, *"Don't be afraid! God wants to use you in a special way. You will have a son, and His name will be Jesus. He will be great and be called the Son of God Most High. The Lord God will make him king, as his ancestor David was. Jesus will rule the people of Israel forever, and his kingdom will never end."*

Mary popped back and said, *"How can this happen? I am not married!"*

And **Gabriel** said, *"The Holy Spirit will come upon you and God's power will come over you. This baby, your baby, will be called the holy Song of God. Elizabeth, your cousin, is also going to have a son, even though she is old. No one thought she could ever have a baby, but in three months she will have a son."*

And Gabriel left Mary with these last few words;

Gabriel: *"Nothing is impossible for God!"*

Mary was ready; she said to Gabriel,

Mary: *"I am the Lord's servant! Let it happen as you have said."*

All of this would come true just like Isaiah said it would: "A virgin will have a baby boy, and he will be called Immanuel," which means "God is with us."

And then there was Joseph (Joseph waves). We can't forget about him! Joseph was a good man, but when he heard from Mary about this surprise baby, well, he was ready to call off the wedding. Joseph thought about this a lot (pondering/thinking), and he just felt tired all the time thinking about it. (Joseph lays down like taking a nap). While he was napping, an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream.

The angel of the Lord told Joseph, *"The baby that Mary will have is from the Holy Spirit. Go ahead and marry her. Then after her baby is born, name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

(Narrator) Joseph quickly woke up from the dream and did just as I told him. This was a spectacular moment. All the world was waiting for it: that God would come to be with His people. Immanuel which means God is with us.

(Mary and Joseph leave spot and walk behind the audience.)

The Birth of Jesus

(Town bustling, kids talking, Mary and Joseph finally arrive to town)

(Narrator) About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people to be listed in record books.

Centurion: "Alright now. Settle down. Here's the deal. We got to get a head count here. Caesar Augustus wants to know how many people live in his kingdom. So take a number and line up."

(Narrator) Everyone had to go to their own hometown to be listed. Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to Bethlehem in Judea (leave bustling town part and walk over to the manger). Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.

Mary was engaged to Joseph and traveled with him to Bethlehem. (Mary sits down in the manger; Joseph stands behind her).

She was soon going to have a baby, but there was no room anywhere in town to stay. So Joseph and Mary stayed in a stable. That's right! A place where donkeys, sheep, and

horses sleep and eat. And while they were there in the stable, Mary gave birth to her first-born son. His name is Jesus! She dressed him in baby clothes and laid him on a bed of hay in a feeding trough. The Savior of the World was born!

The Shepherds

(Shepherds in front of “field” – some standing, some sitting; sheep in audience “baaing”)

(Narrator) That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, (shepherds cower in fear at the angel’s presence) and the brightness of the Lord’s glory flashed around them. The shepherds were frightened.

An angel said,

“Don’t be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy. This very day in King David’s hometown a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. You will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay.”

(Narrator) Then lots of other angels came down from heaven and appeared before the shepherds. They joined in praising God too.

They said (angel ensemble says aloud):

*“Praise God in heaven!
Peace on earth to everyone
who pleases God.”*

(Narrator) After the angels had left and gone back to heaven.

The shepherds said to each other,

“Let’s go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about.”

(Narrator) They hurried off (shepherds stand up and begin walking over to Mary and Joseph) and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay. When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him. Everyone listened and was surprised. But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant.

As the shepherds returned (walk back to the field) to their sheep (sheep “baa”), they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

Eight days later Jesus' parents did what the Law of Moses commands. Mary and Joseph named the baby Jesus, just as the angel had told Mary when he promised she would have him.

The Wise Men

(Narrator) When Jesus was born in the village of Bethlehem in Judea, Herod was king.

During this time some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem (wise men walking en masse from stage left and stop at Herod – where the village was) and said to King Herod (standing there with some soldiers):

(Wise Man #1) *“Where is the child born to be king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”*

(Narrator) When King Herod heard about this, he was worried (Herod shows worried face), and so was everyone else in Jerusalem. Herod brought together the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses and asked them,

(Herod) *“Where will the Messiah be born?”*

He was told,

(Lead Chief Priest) *“He will be born in Bethlehem, just as the prophet wrote, Bethlehem in the land of Judea you are very important among the towns of Judea. From your town will come a leader who will be like a shepherd for my people Israel.”*

Herod secretly called in the wise men and asked them when they had first seen the star. He told them,

(Herod) *“Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, let me know. I want to go and worship him too.”*

(Narrator) The wise men listened to what Herod said and then left (begin walking over to Mary and Joseph). And the star they had seen in the east went on ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. They were thrilled and excited to see the star.

When the men went into the house and saw the child with Mary, his mother, they knelt down and worshiped him. They took out their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh and gave them to him. Later they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, and they went back home by another road (wise men walk stage right).

The End