

The Foolishness of Christmas

This play is meant to be adapted to as many children as possible, with the idea that they don't have lots of lines to learn. Only Sophia (played by an adult) and Child 4 (an older child would be best) need to say much at all. (It's best to use the actual names of the children, rather than "stage" names). During each segment, and the Carols following, the children act out the scene being described, with costumes etc. This can be made quite comical, and should add to the overall fun of the play. It is good if the congregation can join with the singing, so they have a sense of participating in the play as well.

The carols which are sung can be chosen to suit your congregation and may include traditional music, contemporary Christmas songs or any combination – you decide what will work best for you!

Cast: **Sophia the Storyteller** – A Gypsy-ish woman who captures the children with her stories.

A group of **6 children** for speaking parts (use their own names)

One child does not buy into the whole Christmas thing.

An optional group of additional **children** (of any number) who do not speak, but who act out the various scenes in the play while the others are speaking.

Congregation sing: (*Suggestion – Joy To The World*)

Child 1: Oh, boy, I just love Christmas Carols!

Child 2: I just love Christmas! It's such a wonderful time of year!

Child 3: Oh, yes! And I can't wait for it to come! It's much too exciting - I think I'm going to pop!

Child 4: Well, I don't know what all the fuss is about. I think Christmas is stupid!

Others: What?!

Child 4: My Dad says it's just for kids, and makes people spend too much money. The presents are nice, but I prefer birthdays, when I'm the only one who gets any!

Child 5: I think you're crazy, (*Child 4*). What about the magic and the laughter and the decorations? And the music...

Child 6: The music! It's my favourite part – so happy and light and singable! Come on guys, let's sing another carol. Please!

Kids & Congregation sing: (*Suggestion – use a contemporary carol*)

(All the kids sing with great glee and gusto. Child 4 looks around amazed, starts to get drawn in, but then gets irritated by all the cheer. He puts on his best "Bah humbug" face, and stares at the others who remain oblivious. As the song ends, he mounts a strong protest, but unnoticed by any of the children a strange character, humming to herself, enters and hovers behind the group)

Child 4: (As the carol ends). Oh, be quiet! This whole thing is just silly! Do you really think all this cheer and touchy feely stuff makes any difference? These carols are just so smarmy! I can't stand it!

Sophia: (Imitating Child 4) These carols are just so smarmy! I can't stand it! (Big smile)

Kids: (ad lib) Who are you? Where did you come from? Etc.

Child 4: (Turning around crossly) Oh, stop that! Hey, who are you? You're weird!

Sophia: (Smiling but imitating Child 4) Who are you? You're weird!

Child 4: Stop that!

Sophia: Stop that!

Child 4: *Groans in frustration & turns to stomp away.*

Sophia: Ooh, so cross! What's biting you, Bunny?

Child 2: (*As Child 4 stares daggers at Sophia*) His name's not Bunny! It's (*Child 4*)!

Sophia: And my name's Sophia. I tell stories to help kids learn about life, and truth and God. How do you do? So, what's biting you, *Child 4*?

Child 4: I'm sick of having Christmas rammed down my throat! These other kids just keep singing Christmas carols. And I don't like Christmas carols!

Sophia: (*Imitating again*) I don't like Christmas carols! (*In mock dismay*) Oh no! The Grinch is here! The Grinch is here! Quick, run for cover!

Child 4: I'm serious!

Sophia: So am I. How can you not like Christmas carols?

Child 5: He thinks Christmas is foolish!

Sophia: Ok. I miss the part where that's a problem.

Child 4: (*Taken aback*) You know – stupid, ridiculous, silly, meaningless.

Sophia: Oh, I get it. You think because it's foolish, it can't be clever, or true, or important?

Child 1: (*The kids are all interested now*) But isn't that what "foolish" means?

Sophia: (*Laughing*) Not always. Sometimes the cleverest and most important things are the silliest – or at least that's how they look at first.

Child 3: What do you mean?

Sophia: Well, let's take Christmas, for example. It's a strange story, but it's also one of the most important. That's why there are so many songs about it.

Child 6: Oh, I love the songs! Especially this one!

Kids & Congregation sing: (*Suggestion – Away In A Manger*)

Child 4: Well, I don't care what you say. I still think Christmas is stupid.

Sophia: You know, even when it happened, some people thought the same thing. But, all that shows is that they were too foolish to understand the foolishness of Christmas!

Kids: Huh?

Sophia: That's right. Let me show you what I mean. I don't know if this story happened exactly like this, but I do know that it's true. (*With a twinkle in her eye*) Now, where does it start again?

Child 6: Well, there was the angel...

Child 3: (*Getting into it now*) ...who told Mary she was going to have a baby.
(*Mary, acting out scene, takes doll from angel & puts it under her shirt*)

Child 1: Oh yes, and the baby was going to be God's Son, the King of Israel.

Child 5: And then there was a cen... sentence... censor?

Sophia: Census - that's when they count people to find out how many live in a country.

Child 2: Right! So, Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem.

Child 6: (*Really excited*) But, all the inns were full, so there was no place for them to sleep, except the stable!

Kids & Congregation sing: (*Suggestion – Mary’s Boy Child*)

Child 4: Well, that's just silly!

Sophia: What is?

Child 4: A strange couple knocks on the door and expects to be given a room? No one knew who they were. I wouldn't have let them in either!

Sophia: (*Enjoying this*) That's what happens when you can't see further than what you can see. What's more foolish – refusing to help people unless they look important, or showing a little kindness wherever you can?

Child 6: I don't think kindness is ever foolish!

Sophia: Me neither! And remember, everyone was waiting – praying – for this king to come. But then, they didn't recognise him when he knocked on their door!

Child 4: That's if he really was a king!

Sophia: Well, remember, there was another king around at that time, too.

Child 2: King Herod!

Sophia: That's right. And he believed that this baby was a king.

Child 6: Yes, but he wasn't very nice!

Child 1: When he found out about the baby, he tried to get him killed!

Child 5: Oh, but, I remember. Joseph and Mary escaped with Jesus - so he was OK.

Child 3: Wow! What an exciting story! I'm not sure if my nerves can handle it - I think I'm going to pop!

Kids & Congregation sing: (*Suggestion – What Child Is This?*)

Child 3: Wow! King Herod was really pretty silly wasn't he?

Child 5: Imagine a powerful king like that being scared of a new born baby!

Child 1: Sophia, Was everybody in the story so foolish?

Sophia: Oh no! There are always some people who can see past what's on the outside, what looks strange and unimportant, and find the truth inside. Any guesses who that was in this story?

(*Pause as all the kids scratch their heads, thinking hard*)

Child 2: I know, I know! The Shepherds!

Child 6: Hey, let's sing, "While Shepherds Washed Their Socks!" (*Pulling off his/her socks*)

Child 4: (*Grumpily*) That's "Watched Their Flocks", you dummy!

Sophia: Ok, *Child 4*, you help us get it right, then!

Kids & Congregation sing: (*Suggestion – While Shepherds Watched*)

Sophia: So, the Shepherds believed, and went to worship the Baby Jesus. Kneeling next to a feeding trough must have looked pretty stupid, but somehow they knew it was a very wise thing to do!

Child 4: Why? What could possibly be good about worshipping a baby?

Sophia: This wasn't just any baby. This was Jesus. In some way that we'll probably never really understand, God had come into the world in this little baby boy. That's why he was also called Emmanuel.

Child 2: Oh yes, I heard about that! It means “God with us”!
Sophia: That's right, *Child 2*.
Child 3: Was there any one else in the story who was wise like the shepherds?
Sophia: Oh, yes! Can anyone remember?
(Pause as all the kids scratch their heads, thinking hard)
Child 5: Oh, I remember! The wise men!
Sophia: Well done, *Child 5*. What did they do?
Child 4: *(Getting caught up at last)* I know, I know! They saw a star in the East!
Child 1: And they followed it all the way to Jesus!
Child 6: And they worshipped him too. And gave Him presents.
Child 3: I love presents! They're so exciting, I could just pop!
Sophia: That must have looked pretty foolish – wise men giving gifts to a little boy that no one recognised! But, these dignified travellers were wise enough to recognise the king when they saw him – even though he was just a child.

Kids & Congregation sing: *(Suggestion – We Three Kings)*

Child 4: OK, so Christmas might seem foolish, but it isn't. I get that now. But, so what? It all happened so long ago!
Kids: *(Ad lib)* Yes, what difference does it make now? He's right etc.
Sophia: But, Kids, this isn't just a story that happened a long time in the past. It's a story that teaches us about God and about life, and how to live it well. The truth in this story isn't just for back then. It's important now.
Child 1: What do you mean, Sophia?
Sophia: Remember, the real foolishness is missing the wisdom hidden in the story. Can you think what it is?
Child 2: Oh, you mean like the innkeepers could remind us that God sometimes shows up in unexpected places?
Sophia: That's right, *Child 2*. And sometimes God might even come in ways that look really foolish.
Child 5: And Herod shows us that it's really stupid to try and hurt people we don't understand.
Sophia: Yes, *Child 5*. It's foolish to think we can feel better about ourselves by making other people feel worse.
Child 6: And the shepherds and wise men tell us that small things can sometimes be the most important things.
Sophia: And no matter how small or weak we might be, we always have hope when we remember that God is with us, and when we open our hearts to Jesus.
Child 3: Oh, this is all so very amazing, I think I could just pop!
Child 4: Ok, I think I understand now. I thought Christmas was just about silly songs, and getting lots of presents. But it was me who was being foolish. Christmas is much more than that.
Sophia: Yes, *Child 4*, Christmas is only foolish when we forget all the wisdom hidden inside it.

Kids & Congregation sing: *(Suggestion – O Come All Ye Faithful)*