



**Mennonite
Church**
Canada

Resource Centre

From our Churches

Author: Arlyn Friesen Epp

Church: First Mennonite Church,
Kitchener, ON

Date: 1995

This resource is part of a larger **From Our Churches** archives available as an inspirational resource to teachers, ministers and others of Mennonite Church Canada. Posted by permission of the author. Permission to reproduce and distribute is granted.

Who is this Child?

Children, Youth and Adult Christmas Program

WORD OF WELCOME

Opening CONGREGATIONAL HYMN HWB #172, O come, O come, Immanuel

PRAYER

Scene One - I am Born

(YOUTH CHOIR, #180, The Angel Gabriel)

Angel narration: *(said from offstage with mic)*

Mary, do not be afraid. You have found favour with God. You will conceive in your womb and bear a son whom you shall name Jesus. Jesus will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.

Mary: My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for the Lord has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden. God has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and has lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, according to the promise made to our ancestors.

(CHILDREN'S CHOIR, #202, The virgin Mary had a baby boy)

Angel narration: *(said again from offstage with mic)*

Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife. She is pregnant by the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son who will save his people from their sins.

Joseph: *(In jeans and old shirt, with hammer or saw in hand, leaning on work bench)*

That's a thought! My boy, a carpenter's son, a child from Nazareth, is to be the saviour of the world. I can hardly believe it. We have waited long for a Messiah. What type of saviour shall he be? Many expect him to be a warrior, a Messiah of power. People want someone who can destroy the Romans by force. Is my boy to be a warrior? No, surely not. Surely our baby doesn't fit into that kind of plan. Maybe he'll be like Moses; a humble shepherd, a son of slaves, leading his people back to God. Maybe, in his own way, he will upset the establishment, fill the hungry, and help his servant Israel. Who really is this person born to us? Who is this child?

(STRING ENSEMBLE, HYMN 215, 'What Child is This')

Scene Two - I am the Light of the World

(Two readers enter with candles.)

1 In the beginning God
2 GOD created
1 God CREATED the heavens and the earth
2 The earth was without form and void and the darkness was
upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God was
1 Moving
2 Moving over the face of the waters
1 And God said
2 Let there be light
1 And there was light
And God saw that the light was good;
2 The light was good
1 The light is good
2 God separated the light from the darkness.

(Brief pause.)

1 In the beginning was the Word
2 And the Word was with God
1 And the Word was God.
2 Everything
1 Everything was created through him.
2 Nothing
1 Nothing was created without him.
In him was life and the life was the light for all
2 He was the light
1 He is the light for all
2 This light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not
overcome it.

Jesus: *(Enters along a congregational aisle as STRING ENSEMBLE plays "Shine Jesus Shine". This is played as Jesus speaks)*

I am the light of the world. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in me should have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Yet, the people chose to love darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest their deeds should be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been for God. I am the light that overcomes all darkness.

(CHILDREN (on chorus) and YOUTH CHOIRS sing "Shine Jesus Shine". Disciples enter with blind man)

D1 Jesus, this man has been blind since birth.
D2 Who has sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born
blind?

Jesus: *(while spitting and gathering clay and applying it to the man's face)*

It was not that this man or his parents sinned, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him. Go, young man, and wash yourself in the pool of Siloam.

(Blind man exits, Jesus remains)

Pharisee: *(enters with hand around shoulder of the formerly blind man and carrying brief case. A second, Pharisee stands with arms crossed.)*

Friend, you have been associating with sinners, haven't you? I mean, is it not true that you have been with Jesus?

Blind man: Whether he is a sinner or not, I do not know. But as I have already said, I once was blind but now I see!

(The unspoken Pharisee walks behind him, forces him to sit, and begins giving him a coerced back massage)

Pharisee: *(thumbing through a file in brief case)*

Friend, believe me, I do understand you're exuberance but you must admit, this is an unusual case - a supposed healing ... on the sabbath. We need to get to the bottom of this. Your cooperation is needed. Have you been associating with Jesus?

Blind man: *(loud)* He is no sinner! He has made me well!

Pharisee: Friend, please calm down, I won't hurt you. Simply tell me again, for the record, what did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?

Blind man: I have told you everything already and you will not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? *(motioning to get up from his chair)* Do you too want to become his disciples?

(The quiet Pharisee pushes him back to seating position)

Pharisee: YOU are his disciple. We are the disciples of Moses! We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from!

Blind man: *(in defense)* Why, this is strange! He has opened my eyes and yet you do not know where he has come from! He is from God!

(Quiet Pharisee grabs him and drags him off stage)

Pharisee *(pointing at the man)* Blasphemy! You were born in sin! How can you teach us?!

(Blind man enters and walks to Jesus)

Jesus: Do you believe in the Son of Man?

Blind man: And who is he, sir, that I may believe in Him?

Jesus: It is I. I am the light of the world; anyone who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. I came into this world that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind.

Blind man: Lord, I believe.

(Jesus, Blind man exits. Two readers with candles enter.)

Scene Three - I am Peace*

1 The people who have walked in darkness have seen a great light
2 Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone
1 We are those people
2 We ARE those people
1 We have been called out of the darkness of our world
2 We have seen the light and we have become light
1 Jesus is our light
2 Jesus is our light

(2 readers exit. Peter enters.)

Peter: I am known as Simon, the fisherman. I love to fish on the Galilee. It's easy sailing unless the sea turns against you. One afternoon last week we had wind, wind that was faster than usual. The sea came up in a hurry.

(Storm music and lightning in the background. Two disciples - one from either side of the stage - pull at ropes resembling mast supports. Another disciple is bailing water with bucket)

Peter: The waves were vicious - higher than the boat was long. Andrew and Judas were with me on the tiller. Thomas and Philip and Matthew were bailing water, with great swings of their leather buckets. But the water was rising. *(pause)* The master seemed to be asleep. *(pause)* We were all fighting for our lives; Andrew was gasping for breath. I could tell he was near the end of his strength. Judas, thick and solid like an ox, was silent except for deep grunts. Every muscle in his back and arms bulged and rippled with the straining. I feared we'd go down. *(pause)* I looked again at Jesus. He was silent. *(pause)* In an instant, the tiller bar snapped. All three of us were thrown against the boat. *(The other disciples are thrown and fall Peter remains standing)* And in that instant, clutching the broken piece in my hand, I shouted to the one who was still asleep - "Master, don't you care?! We'll perish!"

Jesus: *(walks down sanctuary aisle, right hand raised, facing Peter, yelling)* Peace! Be still! *(the storm music and lightning stop immediately, the disciples leave their ropes and exit, Jesus sits on stage.)*

Peter: *(not acknowledging Jesus)*

There are no words to explain what happened. Only that, in an instant, all was suddenly calm. There was no wind. We began drifting on the gentle water. I wondered to myself: "Who is this man, that even the wind and waves obey him?"

(CHOIR, hymn #229, Lord, you have come to the lakeshore)

Jesus: *(smiling, listening to Peter)*

Peter, I am peace. *(Jesus walks to him)* I am the prince of peace! Do not let your heart be troubled. Do not be afraid. *(Jesus puts arm around Peter's shoulder and speaks as they exit)* I give you my peace, not as the world gives it to you but as I and my Father wish to share it with you.

*Much of this scene has been adapted from *To Walk in the Way*, by Urie A. Bender, pp. 77-79.

Scene Four - I am Christ

(two readers enter)

1 Jesus came and preached peace to all
2 To all who were far off
1 To all who were near
2 All have access to the Father through Him

(brief pause)

1 By breaking down the walls of hostility
2 By fulfilling the law of commandments
1 By witnessing to be the Lord of all creation
2 Jesus made peace
1 Jesus brought reconciliation
2 Jesus brought all hostility to an end
1 Jesus is our peace

(readers exit lower stage)

(Jesus and three disciples enter stage 1, Jesus with portable chair in hand. Jesus sits on chair, disciples gather round, two sitting on floor, Peter standing)

Jesus: Who do people say that I am?
D1 People aren't always sure. We get mixed messages.
D2 Some have said that you are a prophet. Others believe you are John the Baptist.
D1 They're ready to believe almost anything, I suppose.
D2 They're wanting a leader with religious and political authority.
D1 Many suggest that the time is ripe for a change.
D2 A revolution some argue.
D1 People are desperate. Many feel hopeless.
D2 Many are pinning all their aspirations on you.

(brief pause)

Jesus: And who do you say that I am?
D1 We too believe in you.
D2 You are our Hope.
D1 Our healer and teacher
D2 You are the Light of the world
D1 You are our Peace
D2 You are the Way, the Truth, the Life
D1 You are like Living Water
D2 You are the Bread of Life, the Good Shepherd.

Peter: *(after brief pause)* You are the Christ! The Son of the Living God!

Jesus: *(standing)* Blessed are you, my disciples. You know my Father. You know me. I am extremely glad. *(All exit in a group hug. 2 readers enter)*

1 Jesus spent a long time
2 Many hours
1 Lots of energy
2 Training his disciples.
1 Finally,
2 After many hours, a lot of energy and much time
1 The Truth was within them:
2 You are our Christ!

(brief pause)

1 Albeit the right proclamation
2 That truth -- that Jesus was the Christ --
1 Had little real meaning yet
2 The disciples failed to truly understand
1 Failed to comprehend
2 Appreciate
1 Or own their Master's love.
2 Christ was to suffer and die
1 Bear our griefs
2 Carry our sorrows.
1 Christ would be wounded for our transgressions
2 He would be bruised for our iniquities
1 This truth
2 This truth of our Saviour's love
1 Had not yet penetrated the disciples' early proclamation

(brief pause)

2 'You are our Christ'
1 Had been so right and yet so wrong
2 The disciple's king
1 Their Messiah
2 Their Christ
1 Was to really be a servant
2 A lamb led to slaughter

(brief pause)

1 Peter did not yet fully know
2 For Jesus had also yelled, 'Get behind me Satan!'
1 Then Jesus wept. His disciples did not yet understand
2 Although they claimed him to be the Messiah
1 That title had yet to be fully shaped
2 The disciples still asked
1 Who is this man? *(readers exit)*

Scene Five - I am the Vine

(CONGREGATIONAL HYMN, #307 'Will You Let Me Be Your Servant'. This is sung (while being seated) as disciples bring a table on stage, set it, bring chairs, light table candles, bring out bread and juice. After the song, all are seated, with Jesus in middle.)

Jesus: *(said to disciples around the table)*

Listen to me carefully. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than the person who lays down their life for a friend. You are my friends, if you love one another. You are my friends, for all that I have heard from my father, I have made known to you.

(Jesus, gets up, and one by one, washes the disciples' feet while speaking the following lines)

Soon I will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes. They will condemn me to death. They will kill me. You are my friends, my disciples. Have faith. Do not be afraid. Truly, I am with you to the end of the age. I have appointed you as my ambassadors. Take my example. Take up your cross. Follow me.

(Jesus finishes washing the disciples' feet and stands)

I have confidence in you. I will be with you.

(Jesus begins to serve the bread and wine as he speaks)

I am the vine. You are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. As the Father has loved me, I have loved you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

(STRING ENSEMBLE plays hymn #307 as a transition piece)

Scene Six - I am King

(2 readers enter)

1 The time came for Jesus to be taken away
2 Father, he said, the hour has come. Give glory to your Son so that the Son may give glory to You.

(brief pause)

1 Then Judas kissed him
2 Judas kissed him
1 And Jesus was betrayed.
2 Betrayed
1 Broken
2 Stabbed in the back by a friend.
1 Jesus was taken away and brought before the authorities
2 He was delivered to the chief priests and to the scribes
1 And the chief priests and scribes condemned Jesus to death.
2 Jesus was to die.
1 The pounding of the nails was to drive out all the life in him.
2 The Christ was to be executed:
1 Firing squad
2 Guillotine
1 Electric Chair
2 An empty cross.
1 Hung as a criminal
2 Sentenced to death.
1 Seeing fit to kill Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees delivered him to the Gentiles.
2 They mocked him
1 They spat upon him
2 They scourged him
1 Humiliated him
2 Tortured him
1 And sentenced him to death.

(2 readers exit)

(Herod sits in chair. His guard stands to the side)

Herod: Pilate has sent Jesus to me?

Guard: Yes, King Herod, Pilate sends this message: *(reads scroll)* To Herod, Tetrarch of Galilee. The Jews have brought Jesus to me demanding that he be put to death. But I find no fault in him. Because Jesus is a Galilean, he is rightly under your jurisdiction. I send Jesus to you in hope that I may hear your most excellent opinion on the matter of his guilt or innocence.

Herod: Well, bring this Jesus in. I have heard much about him. Perhaps he will show us one of his miraculous signs.

(guard leaves and returns with Jesus)

So you are Jesus. Why have they brought you here?

Guard: He has been stirring up trouble. He has been perverting the nation. He forbids us to pay taxes to Caesar. He claims to be the king of the Jews!

Herod: I have heard rumours that you have performed many great signs; healing the sick, casting out demons and even raising people from the dead. Are these rumours true?

(silence)

Oh come now, Jesus. The people say that you have done things even the magicians could not do. Perform for us. Show us this incredible power.

(silence, Herod getting angry)

Do you refuse to answer your king? Who do you think you are?

(silence, Herod very angry now)

Who are you Jesus? Some say you are Elijah ... well, is that true? Are you the great prophet Elijah? Or, perhaps, you claim to be John the Baptist? I beheaded John! Jesus of Nazareth, answer me, who are you?

(silence)

Guard: I tell you, he claims he is a king!

(silence, Herod stares at Jesus)

Herod: *(begins to laugh)*

So you are the king of the Jews, are you? What a stately figure you are! *(slaps Jesus, turns to guard)*
Bring this king some royal robes. *(guard brings in a robe and puts it on Jesus)*

(mocking Jesus) Oh, thou royal, majestic king. Your power overwhelms your humble subjects.
(Guard laughs, mocks Jesus, shoves him, bows before him, etc.)

(STRING ENSEMBLE plays one or two verses of hymn #215 'What Child is This')

Scene Seven - I am the Resurrection

(two readers enter)

1 The crowd that Good Friday
2 That first Good Friday
1 Yelled
2 Crucify him!
1 Crucify him!
2 Crucify him!
1 The crowd wanted him dead.
2 The human desire not to listen
1 But to kill
2 Overwhelmed them.
1 Finish him
2 Destroy him
1 Finally get rid of him
2 We've had enough of him
1 Crucify him
2 Crucify him

(brief pause)

1 They did not know who they were killing,
2 What kind of Messiah is this anyway?
1 And Pilate washed his hands,
2 Who is this man you ask me to kill?
1 And Peter denied him,
2 I do not know who this man is

(brief pause)

1 Everyone so close to Jesus
2 But no one understanding him
1 Who is Jesus?
2 Who is he really?

(brief pause)

1 He died
2 Forsaken on the cross
1 He died
2 Abandoned, left alone, forgotten
1 He died
2 Abused. Mistreated. Wounded
1 He died

(brief pause)

2 Who was Jesus?

1 Who was he really?
2 The thief, a public criminal, executed beside him, said
1 Unlike me, this man has done nothing wrong.
2 The Roman centurion, a Gentile, near to him when he died, said
1 Surely, he was from God
2 He was a righteous child of God.
1 One, of whom God could say,
2 I am well pleased.

(brief pause)

1 Jesus reexamined
2 Rearticulated
1 Redefined Israelite faith.
2 Repeatedly offering redemption and shalom
1 Jesus envisioned a new model of service
2 A new ministry of reconciliation
1 A new covenant
2 A new peace.

(brief pause)

1 Jesus, the Messiah:
2 Unexpected, controversial, surprising
1 His would be the life and ministry that God would vindicate, endorse and affirm
2 Raising him from the dead
1 Raising him from the dead
2 Set as an example, and placed as the Head of the church.
1 The firstborn of a new humanity
2 The author and finisher of our faith
1 The alpha and omega
2 The goal of all creation.
1 Surely, he was from God
2 He was from God
1 He is from God.

Mary Magdalene: *(Runs across the stage and down congregational aisle, excited)*

He is alive! I have seen Jesus! He is alive! I bear witness to his hands, his head, his side. He has arisen. He is the Resurrection and the Life!

(two readers and Mary exit)

(CHOIR sings one song as a few children, representing Mary, Joseph, shepherds and wise men, set up the "typical" nativity scene. After the song is finished, and the scene established, children remain stationed during the CONGREGATIONAL HYMN, #318, 'Joy to the World,' played with trumpets.)

(two readers enter lower stage)

1 Do not be afraid

2 Do not fear
1 I bring you good news of great joy for all people
2 To you is born this day in the city of David
1 A Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord.
2 This will be a sign for you:
1 You will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.
2 Glory to God in the highest
1 Glory to God in the highest
2 And on earth peace
1 On earth peace among those whom he favours.
1+2 Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place.

(readers join the nativity scene. CONGREGATIONAL HYMN, #212, 'O come all ye faithful.' As hymn is sung, rest of the children proceed to the nativity scene and gather around it.)