

## The Program

How easy it is in the busyness of everyday life to overlook the evidence of God among us. In *The Wonder Ben*, the dreamy son of a Bethlehem innkeeper, helps his mother—and us as well—see the wonder of the baby born in a manger.

The program may be adapted to fit large or small congregations. The script calls for up to 20 individual parts, of which the roles of Ben and Mama require the most memorization. Group scenes, a children's choir, and a youth choir offer opportunities to involve any number of children. A mix of new and familiar Christmas carols and the traditional nativity scene combine to make this part of an inspiring worship service.

The program as presented here will take a bit over 30 minutes. If it is presented within a service of Holy Communion, this may take the place of the gathering and word sections of the liturgy, and following "Joy to the World," the liturgy may continue with the prayers, followed by the peace and the offering. If presented in a service of the word, the program may be preceded by a gathering song, and followed by a sermon (if desired), offering, prayers, hymn, and blessing.

The Wonder, revised edition  
A Christmas Program for Children

Copyright © 1988, 2003 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Except brief quotations in critical articles or reviews, no part of this book may be reproduced in any manner without prior written permission from the publisher. Write to: Permissions, Augsburg Fortress, Box 1209, Minneapolis, MN 55440-1209. Or visit [www.augsburgfortress.org/copyrights](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/copyrights)

Augsburg Fortress copyright licenses are available to facilitate the reproduction of congregational song in worship bulletins or projections. For more information, visit the copyright area on the Augsburg Fortress website ([www.augsburgfortress.org/copyrights](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/copyrights)).

Writer: Carol Pirtle  
Editors: Robert Buckley Farlee, Becky Lowe  
Cover design: David Meyer

Manufactured in the U.S.A.  
09 08 07 06 05 04 03

ISBN 978-0-8066-4692-3  
2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

# The Wonder

A Christmas Program for Children

## SCENE 1: Introduction (Option 1)

*Stage is bare except for manger at center stage, and simple table and chair for tax collector at stage right. A stool is stage left front. Storyteller enters and takes a seat on the stool. Children of the preschool class gather around.*

STORYTELLER: *(to children)* How many of you like stories? *(waits for answers)* . . . I like stories too. What are your favorite kinds of stories? *(waits for answers)* . . . Do you know what kind I like best? I like bedtime stories better than anything. I always liked it when my mom or dad tucked me into bed and read a happy story. That way I would always have happy dreams.

Tonight we're going to hear a different kind of story; this kind of story is called a play. Do you know what a play is? . . . A play is a story that we can see. It is a story that is acted out so we can see with our own eyes just how the story happened.

I want you to close your eyes now and imagine that you are in a dusty little town called Bethlehem more than 2,000 years ago. Here we will meet Benjamin, an artist and a dreamer. And we will meet his mama, an innkeeper—someone who runs a little hotel. *(turns to congregation)* Come with us now to share the wonder of that long-ago Christmas night.

## Production Notes

### PERSONNEL

*The Wonder* is a Christmas program that calls for the talents of all ages. It is also flexible. The songs indicated for children's choir and youth choir may all be sung by a single choir, or by groups from within the Sunday school. The main cast might be played by high school students; although the parts of Mama and Storyteller could be played by adults. Some of the shepherd and angel lines may be reassigned and spoken by fewer actors.

The following speaking parts need to be assigned:

Storyteller

Mama—an innkeeper

Benjamin—her son

Ethan—a shepherd boy

Joseph

Mary (no spoken lines; one song that may be shared)

Shepherds 1-5

Angels 1-5

Wise Men 1, 2, 3 (or may be female)

There are also two Bible verses, in scenes 5 and 7, which may be spoken by Sunday school classes or by individual characters as indicated.

In addition, the nonspeaking parts of Tax Collector, Blind Boy, and Flower Girl must be assigned.

Additional shepherds and angels may be used in Scene 5, and additional magi (Wise Men or Women) in Scene 7. (The Bible doesn't tell us how many there were.) Altogether, the angels and shepherds might make up the children's choir. Members of the youth choir might also serve as the crowd in Scene 2.

## COSTUMES

The actors may be dressed as follows:

Mama—tunic covered by apron, sandals

Benjamin—tunic, “beanie” type cap, sandals

Ethan—tunic, “beanie” type cap, sandals

Mary—long, white tunic; blue headpiece, sandals

Joseph—long, earthtone tunic, sandals; optional: beard

Tax Collector—long, colorful tunic, turban, sandals

Blind Boy—short tunic, sandals

Flower Girl—short tunic, sandals

Wise Men—long robes, jewelry, sandals; optional: beards

Shepherds—short tunics, sandals; optional: beards

Angels—white robes, wings, halos

Storyteller—modern street clothes

## STAGING

Staging may be as elaborate as a congregation chooses. Or it may be as simple as a manger, a table, a couple of chairs. The characters should be arranged so that they are always speaking toward the congregation. In scenes involving the manger, that should always be at the center of attention, never obstructed. If choirs sing from the stage, they may be arranged at the back of it.

## PROPS

Manger

Crude table

Two stools

Tin cup for Blind Boy

Silk flowers and basket for Flower Girl

Sketch pad

Broom

Baby doll

Gifts for Wise Men

Ledger for Tax Collector

Instrument for Ethan (dulcimer, recorder, guitar, etc.)

## MUSIC

The music may be assigned as follows. This outline may also be used for the service folder.

### ORDER OF SERVICE

#### Scene 1: Introduction (Option 1)

Song, "Get Ready" preschool

#### Scene 1: Introduction (Option 2)

#### Scene 2: The Marketplace

#### Scene 3: Stable at the Inn

Song, "Away in a Manger" youth choir

#### Scene 4: Stable at the Inn

Song, "Mary Sang a Song" children's choir

#### Scene 5: Field Outside Bethlehem

Song, "Stay Awake, Be Ready" shepherds 1-3

Song, "Gloria in excelsis Deo" angels

Song, "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly" children's choir

Song, "Angels We Have Heard on High" congregation

#### Scene 6: At the Manger

Song, "Oh, Sleep Now, Holy Baby" Mary (and others, optional)

#### Scene 7: At the Manger

Song, "We Three Kings" youth choir

Song, "O Little Town of Bethlehem" all choirs

#### Closing

Song, "Joy to the World" congregation

The congregational hymn "Angels We Have Heard on High" is printed on the following page. It, along with "Joy to the World" (page 26), may be reproduced freely in service folders.