

12 Days of Christmas Rotation-Christmas Program

Trinity Lutheran Church

Findlay, Ohio

Written by Pastor Linda Rahe (2002)

Adapted for Rotation/edited per Cathy M. Weygandt (Spring 2005)

This program was initially created to be produced live, during Worship. It has been modified to be produced in a **5-week Rotation** then presented to the Church's Congregation on the 5th week during Worship time.

Computers (Cyber Bible), Drama (Disciple Playhouse), Art (Creation Station), and Cooking (Daily Bread Café) will be utilized during the 5 weeks of Rotation. (See end of this post for rotation details.)

Worship Program: The 12 Days of Christmas

Entrance song: Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful LBW 45

Cherub Choir: sings a Christmas song (not necessary)

L: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

L: Let us pray

Almighty God, you have filled us with the new light of the Word
who became flesh and lived among us,
Let the light of our faith shine in all we do;
through you Son, Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen

Opening welcome by Pastor- Worship Program: The 12 Days of Christmas

First Song: The 12 Days Of Christmas plays per recording as Mother, Father, and Child #2 enter and sit in chairs in front nativity scene on the alter. [Have microphones set up closely, children may use scripts to read from.]

Child #1: [walks over to family]

Hi Mr. & Mrs. England and Hi Ellen.

Family: Hi Marcus

Child #1: Wow, I just heard your news. I hear Christmas is going to last for 12 days at your house this year

Child #2: Yes, and every day I'll get more presents. I can hardly wait. Today's the first day so I wonder what my gift will be today.

Image on Screen (or projected on the wall behind the alter): The Apostle's Creed.

[Have the 12 points in bold print as seen below. **During Week 1 of Rotation, the children could produce this in Cyber Bible.**]

Child #1: Here's something now. [points hand up to the screen]

Child #2: Hey, What is this all about? I was expecting presents but this is sure strange.

Mom: Well, it may seem strange but your gifts will be special gifts with special meanings and the good news is that they are all coming tonight.

Child #1: What do you mean that the gifts have a special meaning?

Dad: Well, from 1558 until 1829 many Christians in England were not allowed to practice their religion. The song you heard called The 12 Days Of Christmas, was written for Christian children so that they could learn about their religion without getting into trouble with the English government. Each of the 12 gifts is a code word for one of the Christian religious beliefs. We will start with day 12.

Child #2: That sound backwards!

Mom: You'll understand when we are through because you know we always save the best gift for last. The gift in the song given on the 12th day of Christmas is 12 drummers drumming.

Mom: Our living room is too small to have all those drummers but the 12th day reminds us of the 12 points in the Apostle's Creed. I think the congregation can help us with the meaning of this:

[To congregation] Please stand and join us in praying the Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God, the Father, almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

Mom: Please be seated (to congregation)

Dad: If you listened carefully the 12 points are:

1. God the Father
2. Jesus the Son
3. Incarnation
4. Jesus' passion and suffering
5. Jesus' resurrection
6. Ascension into heaven
7. Judgment
8. Holy Spirit
9. Catholic Church
10. Forgiveness of sins
11. Resurrection of the body
12. Life everlasting

Mom: The 12th day of Christmas has a special name: Epiphany. On this day, 12 days after Christmas day, which makes it Jan 6th we celebrate the day that the 3 Wise Men came to worship the baby Jesus. Let's all join in and sing the first & second verse of We Three Kings. [Public domain, have projected on screen]

Image on Screen: Scenes of the Wise Men visiting Baby Jesus in the stable.

[This would be a digital photo taken of the children dressed in costumes. **These pics would be taken digitally during week 1 in Disciple Playhouse.** This may include several poses with different children as to include any who want to participate.]

Song: We Three Kings (1st & 2nd verse)

Child #2: I wonder what the 11 pipers piping stand for?

Dad: "I'll give you a hint, they are found in Matthew 10:2"

Child # 1 [picks up a Bible] I can find that: "These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of

Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.”

Image on Screen: Children dressed as the 12 Disciples.

[The one dressed as Judas could look sad (frown). **These pics could be taken during week 2 of Disciple Playhouse.**]

Child #2: There were 12 disciples, but after Judas betrayed Jesus there were only 11 left. I guess eleven stands for the eleven faithful disciples.

Child #1: Who are the 10 Lords-A-Leaping?

Child #2: Let me guess, that has to be the 10 Commandments

Images on Screen: Children’s images, holding up the Ten Commandments.

[Ten pictures in a row so that they may be read. **These scroll-type images will have been made in Creation Station during week 1 of Rotation.**]

- a. You shall have no other Gods.
- b. Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
- c. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy.
- d. Honor your father and your mother.
- e. You shall not kill.
- f. You shall not commit adultery.
- g. You shall not steal.
- h. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor
- i. You shall not covet your neighbor’s house.
- j. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his cattle, or anything that is your neighbor’s.

Dad: Your next gift is also found in the Bible.

The Nine Ladies Dancing are the nine truths of the Holy Spirit found in Galatians 5:22 “the fruit of the Spirit is”:

Images on Screen: Children holding up signs with the Fruits of the Spirit on them.

[Make these signs as colorful as real fruits. The signs are **made in Creation Station week 2.** These **pics of the children holding up the signs are taken week 3 in Disciple Playhouse.**]

- a. love,
- b. joy,
- c. peace,

- d. patience,
- e. kindness,
- f. generosity,
- g. faithfulness,
- h. gentleness, and
- i. self-control.

Dad: The Eight maids-a-milking are to remind us of the eight Beatitudes found in Matthew, chapter 5. We will share the meaning of their gifts from the Bible.

Image on Screen: The Beatitudes.

[This will have been created in Cyber Bible during week 2.]

Children will read from the Bible at the pulpit

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (3)

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. (4)

"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. (5)

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. (6)

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. (7)

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. (8)

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (9)

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (10)

Mom: Christmas is a good time for us to remember all our blessings. One way we can do that is by offering some of our blessings back to God to use for God's purposes. We'll do this today by collecting an offering.

[Children from Sunday School will collect the offerings. The prayer is given by Pastor Rahe]

Song: [during offertory] page 60 LBW Hark The Herald Angels Sing

Child #2: Did anyone else hear the splashing sound?

Have a recorded splashing sound.

Image on Screen: 7 swans swimming.

[This is created in Cyber Bible during week 3.]

Mom: The 7 swans-a-swimming represent the seven gifts of the holy Spirit. Can you see what these are?

Image on Screen: Children holding up the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The signs were created in Creation Station week 2. These are taken digitally during week 3 in Disciple Playhouse.

- #1 Faith
- #2 Strength
- #3 Knowledge
- #4 Understanding
- #5 Fear of the Lord
- #6 Counsel
- #7 Wisdom

Child #1: Well, those are great gifts alright. According to the song your next present is six geese-a-laying. I wonder what they are.

Image on Screen: Six geese-a-laying.

[This is created in Cyber Bible during week 3.]

Dad: The six geese a-laying represents the six days of Creation.

Images on Screen: Pictures digitally taken of the children representing the days of Creation.

[Signs created in Creation Station during week 2. Pictures taken during week 3 also during Disciple Playhouse.]

Each child carries a round circle representing the earth with dark/light, seas, etc.

Dad: They represent the 6 days of creation. On the first day God made the light : the day and the night. It was good.

On the second day God separated the waters and made the sky above the waters. It was good.

On the 3rd day God created the dry land and gathered the waters into seas. He made plants for the land and trees. God said this was good.

On the 4th day God created the seasons and put the sun, the moon and the stars in the sky. It was good.

On the 5th day God created every living creature that moves. Creatures in the sea, birds to fly, cattle and wild animals and everything that creeps on the land. It was good.

On the 6th day God created a man and a woman to rule over the earth. Everything that God had made was very Good, so God took the next day off, to rest!

Mom: Creation is a wonderful gift. God created everything because he loved us.

[Family all joins in and sings "5 Golden Rings"]

Child #1: Listen, I think I know what the 5 golden rings means. It represents the 5 Books of the law also called the Torah; There is Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy!

Mom: Wow, that is absolutely right!

Song: [Possible song played by children in the handchimes choir]

Mom: Well, I guess it's time for the next gift. This would be the 4th day so do you remember what the song says?"

Child #1: [The child could sing "Four Calling Birds" if brave enough]
Four Calling birds and here they are.

Image on Screen: Four Calling Birds.

[Created in **Cyber Bible during Week 4**. Then an image of the four Gospels **created during that same time in Cyber Bible.**]

Mom: The Four calling birds stand for the Four Gospels in the Bible.
One bird stands for Matthew, the first of the 4 gospels in the New Testament.
The second bird stands for Mark, the first written and shortest of the 4 gospels in the NT
The third bird stands for Luke, who wrote the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts too.
The book of Acts tells about the acts of the apostles and other leaders in the early church.
The fourth bird stands for John. His gospel is little different that the other three gospels.
Because Matthew, Mark, and Luke have many of the same stories and are so much alike they are called the synoptic gospels. John has stories that are not found in any of the other gospels, such as the story of the woman at the well and the raising of Lazarus.

Dad: I suppose you know what the 3 French hens represent by now?

Image on Screen: Children holding up poster cards with Faith/Love/Hope printed on them.

[These posters will be **created in Creation Station during week #3**. Pictures of the children holding **these signs will be taken during week #4 in Disciple Playhouse.**]

Child #1 and Child # 2: together say: "Oui" (Wee)

Child #1: " One stands for faith.

Dad: "For by grace we are saved by faith."

Child #1: "The second one stands for hope.

Mom: "Our hope is in the Lord who made heaven and earth"

Child # 2: The third one must stand for love!

Dad: 1 Corinthians 13:13 says “And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Mom: I think that the greatest is the love of God that sent us Christ. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

Child #1: Well, this has been an interesting night, I wonder what comes next. What is the second thing in the song? Two turtle doves?

[Two big doves will have been placed in one of the Christmas trees on the alter.]

Mom: See the two doves on the tree? They represent the two parts of the Bible, The Old and New Testament.”

[Recording plays again of The 12 Days Of Christmas. Fades away.]

Dad: Well, we are back to the beginning. The very first day of Christmas. At last we will learn who the partridge in a pear tree is the first gift in the song, the partridge represents the first and most important Christmas gift of all: Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

Mom: The Bible tells us the last piece of this song: the gift giver.
[turns to congregation] Please let’s have all the children come up around the baby Jesus
[manger scene on alter] and we will all join in and sing: Away in a Manger LBW 67

Song: Away in a Manger LBW 67

Mom: [says when finished] You may go back to your families.

Image on Screen: The Nativity scene video is shown.

[As was played out in the **Disciple Playhouse during week 4 and digitally recorded.**

Dad: Our God the father, who gave us all the gifts in the song is the One who sent Jesus to us.
[Pause briefly] There is also a tree in our song and we have not heard that story.
The tree represents the cross on which Jesus died to save us from our sins. The story of Jesus’ birth would not be as special without the cross. For on this cross Jesus took all our sins. God’s promise of eternal life was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

(At this point, you could continue with the following if used on Christmas Eve, when the traditional Gospel is used. Otherwise, you may choose to skip to below *.)

Mom: Since we are back to day one of the song, the first day of Christmas let's hear about that night when we were given the greatest gift of all.

[Christmas lesson from Luke is read by Older child or Adult Lector as Mary & Joseph enter and kneel in front of the pulpit]

*The family and children go and kneel in front of the manger scene on the alter.

Dad: Let's all sing Silent Night, LBW 65

Song: [All the congregation joins in to sing] Silent Night

Child #1: I am sure glad I came over today to hear about the 12 days of Christmas. Your Christmas gifts are the best.

[Family and Child # 2 hug Child #1 and then quietly leaves the alter area, returning to their families.]

The Lessons and Psalm of the day may be omitted. At this point the Pastor would announce the Gospel.

The Holy Gospel according to_____.

The Sermon would be omitted also (lesson was the program).

Proceed with Prayers of the Church.

The Great Thanksgiving.

Pastor: As we learned with the Children's program, Jesus' life and ministry taught us the true meaning of love and God's ultimate gift to us was born out when Jesus went to the cross, gladly bearing our sins. Without the death and resurrection of Jesus the story of Jesus' birth would hold little meaning. Instead it becomes the Greatest Story ever told. Now it is up to us to go and tell others this story. There is another story to share as well. It happened on the night Jesus was betrayed.

[Here we could go into the Holy Communion service]

P: Benediction & Prayer

May you glory in the birth of the Son of God, and may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, + the Son, and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you forever. Amen

Closing Song: Go Tell It On The Mountain" LBW pg 70