



Bells Tell the Story

A Jesus Cares Ministries Christmas Service

Bells Tell the Story: A Jesus Cares Ministries Christmas Service

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To God be the glory!

Overview: *Bells Tell the Story* is a creative Christmas program that beautifully tells the Christmas story using a variety of bells. This service works well for both large and small classes with all levels of ability. The use of a many bells makes this an interesting and meaningful service. All songs can be changed to fit the abilities of your students. All of us, no matter our age or ability, love to ring a bell.

The bells you will need include the following:

- Church bells
- A warning bell (such as the sound of a smoke detector)
- A cowbell
- A dinner bell (triangle)
- Hand bells or hand chimes
- A school bell
- A tolling bell
- Lamb bells (small jingle bells)

The suggested songs are taken from three sources:

Christian Worship

Everyone Sing & Sign

Let All the People Praise You

All three of these books are available from Northwestern Publishing House, www.nph.net.

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Bells Tell the Story

The church bells ring.

🎵 **Students sing:** “Jesus Loves Me,” stanza 1 (*Let All the People Praise You*, Northwestern Publishing House)

Pastor: The church bells have rung; the time for worship has begun. Throughout the ages the church bells have sounded in many countries to call people to come to hear God’s wonderful message of salvation. Today, many bells will sound to tell you, once again, the story of our Savior’s birth. Hear the bells resounding! Christmas Day is coming soon!

All students: Christ is born! God be praised! Let our bells ring always!

Student: It all began in the Garden of Eden. Eve listened to the evil one, the devil.

Pastor: She ate from a tree God had told her and Adam not to eat from. Adam listened to Eve and also ate of the forbidden tree. From that moment on sin entered all human hearts. Everyone deserved eternal punishment.

Student: But God, our loving Father, came to our rescue.

Student: He promised to send a Savior.

Pastor: From then on, the Old Testament believers looked for a Savior to come.

🎵 **Students and congregation sing:** “Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel,” stanzas 1 and 4 (*Christian Worship*, hymn 23)
Students may sing refrain only.

Part 1: The Warning Bell

Student: We welcome you to hear the beautiful story of Jesus’ birth.

Student sounds a warning bell.

Student: What a horrible sound! Turn it off! Why would anyone spoil a Christmas service like that?

Pastor: This is a warning bell. It warns us that something bad will happen. It gives us a chance to escape.

Student: So, what does a warning bell have to do with Christmas?

Pastor: After sin entered the world, God’s people often turned away from him. They needed a warning to return. To bring the people back, God sent prophets to warn the people of disaster and to tell them of God’s plan of salvation.

Student sounds the warning bell again.

Student: The prophet Isaiah sounded a warning bell.

Pastor: He said in chapter 5 verse 20, “Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness.” Isaiah also offered hope by telling God’s people of the Savior to come. Isaiah said in chapter 9 verse 6,

All students and congregation: “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

Student sounds the warning bell again.

Pastor: The warnings of the prophets were heard among God’s children throughout the ages. Many repented and looked forward to the time when God would send his Son to save them.

Part 2: Wedding Bells

Church bells or organ chimes are rung.

Student: The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth.

Student: Gabriel was sent to a young virgin named Mary.

Pastor: “The angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.’” (Luke 1:30-32)
Mary rejoiced and praised God.

Student: The virgin Mary was engaged to a man named Joseph.

Pastor: God brought all the pieces together for our Savior’s birth when an angel appeared to Joseph. In Matthew chapter 1 the angel said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

Student: Joseph did as the angel commanded him. He took Mary as his wife.

Student: The wedding bells are rung, loud and clear.

Church bells or organ chimes are rung.

<p>🎵 Students sing: “Ring the Bells” (<i>Everyone Sing & Sign</i>, Northwestern Publishing House)</p>
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Part 3: A Cowbell

Pastor: God’s plan of salvation was set into motion. A family was chosen to receive the Lord. Now a place was needed for this very special birth.

Student rings a cowbell.

Student: What? That sounds like a cowbell!

Pastor: The cowbell stands for the place where Jesus was born. Our Savior was born in a humble stable, with only cows and sheep looking on.

♪ **Congregation sings:** “Gentle Mary Laid Her Child,” stanzas 1-3 (*Christian Worship*, hymn 56)

Pastor and congregation: “In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.” Luke chapter 2, verses 1 through 7.

Student rings a cowbell.

♪ **Students sing:** “Away in a Manger” (*Christian Worship*, hymn 68)

Part 4: A Dinner Bell

Student rings a dinner bell (triangle).

Student: Everything’s ready! Come to see the Savior.

Student: But that sounded like a dinner bell!

Pastor: That *is* a dinner bell. A dinner bell calls workers in from the fields. That’s what the angel did. The angel called shepherds from the fields. The Savior was born. The humble shepherds of Bethlehem were invited to see him.

Student rings a dinner bell (triangle).

Pastor and congregation: “And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

All students: “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

Pastor: “This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:8-12)

Part 5: Angel Bells

Students ring several hand bells or hand chimes.

Student: What is that sound I hear?

Pastor: That's probably what the shepherds asked too. The angel bells stand for the singing of the angels to the shepherds.

Pastor and congregation: "Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.'" Luke chapter 2, verses 13 and 14.

Student: Hearing the angels sing must have been too wonderful for words.

Students ring several hand bells or hand chimes.

Pastor: We too can praise God with singing. Let's sing together the first verse of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing."

🎵 **Students and congregation sing:** "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," stanza 1
(*Christian Worship*, hymn 61)

Part 6: A Town Crier

Student portraying a town crier enters ringing a school bell.

Student with the bell: Listen! Listen! Listen!

Another student: What are you doing?

Student with the bell: My job is to spread the news.

Pastor: Years ago this is how important information was shared with everyone in town. What sort of news do you spread?

Student with the bell: The best news! The message that we are sharing tonight.

Pastor: When Jesus was born, it wasn't a town crier who first spread the news. The shepherds first spread the good news of Jesus' birth. They were so excited that they told everyone they met about what happened that wondrous night.

Pastor and congregation: "When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in a manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them." Luke chapter 2, verses 15 through 19.

Student: We should be as excited as the shepherds were.

Student: We should tell everyone we meet about the birth of God's Son.

Student portraying a town crier rings school bell again.

All students: Listen! Listen! Listen! The Savior is born!

🎵 **Students and congregation sing:** “Go, Tell It on the Mountain” (*Christian Worship*, hymn 57)

Part 7: A Tolling Bell

A tolling church bell or hand bell is rung slowly.

Student: What sort of a bell is that?

Pastor: That is a tolling bell. It is rung when someone has died.

Student: But this is a service about birth—about new life!

Student: Why is a tolling bell ringing?

Pastor: Because the birth of Jesus was just the beginning. God sent his Son to take our place.

Student: Oh, I remember. Jesus lived a sinless life for us. Then he took our punishment by dying on the cross to take away our sins.

Pastor: The Bible tells us, “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2)

A tolling church bell or hand bell is again rung slowly.

Student: The best news is that he didn’t stay in the grave.

Pastor: He rose again and showed his power over the devil, sin and death. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.” (John 11:25)

Student: This means that all believers will have everlasting life in heaven.

Pastor and congregation: “God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.” First John chapter 5, verses 11 and 13.

🎵 **Students and congregation sing:** “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” stanzas 1 and 4 (*Christian Worship*, hymn 65)

Part 8: The Lamb’s Bells

Students ring lamb bells (small jingle bells).

Student: Is that a new bell we hear?

Student: What do these bells mean?

Pastor: Little lambs can wear these bells so that the shepherd can hear and tell when the lambs have gone astray. The shepherd will show the way back to the fold.

Student: Sheep need a shepherd to give them their food . . . and all that is good. Sheep need a shepherd to keep them from strife . . . and to lay down his life. Sheep need a shepherd to call them by name . . . and to love them the same.

Congregation: Sheep, sound your bells! Let them ring loud and clear! Christ, our Good Shepherd, loves everyone here!

Students ring lamb bells (small jingle bells).

Offering

Prayers

Part 9: Sound the Bells Again!

Pastor: What have we learned? Let's sound the bells again!

Student sounds a warning bell.

Pastor and congregation: The prophets blaring warning bells proclaimed, "Repent! Believe!"

Church bells or organ chimes are rung.

Pastor and congregation: Wedding bells happily a new family receive.

Students ring cowbells.

Pastor and congregation: The humble Babe of Bethlehem was born in stable small,

Student rings a dinner bell (triangle).

Pastor and congregation: Then shepherds quickly ran to greet the Savior born for all.

Students ring several hand bells or hand chimes.

Pastor and congregation: As angels' songs rang through the night, so, too, these bells we choose.

Student portraying a town crier rings school bell again.

Pastor and congregation: Hear ye! Hear ye! Shepherds spread the happy news.

A tolling church bell or hand bell is rung slowly.

Pastor and congregation: A tolling bell leads to the cross, for Jesus died, then rose,

Students ring lamb bells (small jingle bells).

Pastor and congregation: To make us all his precious lambs! This is our story's close.

All the bells are sounded.

Pastor and congregation: But now, before we say amen, sound your happy bells again.

All the bells are sounded.

All students: We'll shout our praise to God above, for sharing with the world his love. A Savior is born!

Pastor: The story has been shared again. But it can't stay within these walls.

All students: Take the message with you!

Pastor: Spread it throughout our community. Spread it throughout our world! Sound the Christmas bells each day!

All the bells are sounded.

 **Students and congregation sing:** "Joy to the World" (*Christian Worship*, hymn 62)