

DECORATING THE TREE WITH A CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

The Christmas Tree has been adopted by Orthodox Christians in America and is one of the most universal decorations during the Christmas season. There is a Christian significance not only in the tree itself, but also in the ornaments that are placed on the boughs.

- 1. As the children place a different ornament upon the tree, the narrator's part and the appropriate scriptural text can be read.*
- 2. Carols that convey the significance of the ornament can be sung or an audiocassette tape of "O Tannenbaum" can be played as the background.*
- 3. The Narrator or Scripture Reader can hold a larger version of each ornament.*

Narrator 1:

The **Christmas tree** is more than a holiday decoration. Its boughs, and the ornaments they carry, give witness to Christ. Because it is always green in color, the evergreen tree has become a symbol of **everlasting life**.

Scripture 1:

In the Old Testament the cedars of Lebanon were used to build Solomon's Temple, where the people of Israel brought their sacrifices to God. In the New Testament John 3:16 tells us "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have **everlasting life**."

Choir 1:

"O Tannenbaum" / "O Christmas Tree"

O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
Your branches green delight us.
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
Your branches green delight us.
They're green when summer days are bright,
They're green when winter snow is white.
O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree,
Your branches green delight us.

Narrator 2:

The Star that tops our tree represents the star the Wise Men followed. It was an unusual star announcing an unusual event - the coming of the Son of God, who was born without sin, but who would suffer for our sins.

Scripture 2:

Matthew 2:1-2 "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, Wise Men from the East came to Jerusalem saying, 'Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His **star** in the East and have come to worship Him.' "

Choir 2: "Star of wonder" refrain from "We Three Kings"

Star of wonder, star of light,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading still proceeding,
Guide us to they perfect light.

Narrator 3:

Ornaments shaped like balls remind us that our world was created by God. We are to go into the world and preach the Gospel.

Scripture 3:

Matthew 28: 19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of **all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Choir 3: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful **all ye nations**, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With th'angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem!
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

Narrator 4:

The assorted colors of our ball-shaped ornaments remind us that the Gospel is for **all different nations** and all races on the earth.

Scripture 4:

Acts 17:26 "And He has made from one blood **every nation** of men to dwell on all the face of the earth..."

Choir 4: "Joy to the World"

Joy to the world! The Lord is come,
Let earth receive her King
Let **every heart** prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Narrator 5:

Angels played three important roles in the Christmas story. The Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that she was chosen to give birth to the Messiah. (Luke 1:26)
An angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream to tell him that this baby was special. (Matthew 1:20)
A choir of angels came to the shepherds to announce the good news.

Scripture 5:

Luke 2:13-14 "And suddenly there was with the **angel** a multitude of the **heavenly host** praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men.'"

Choir 5: "Angels We Have Heard on High"

Angels we have heard on high,
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains,
Gloria, In excelsis Deo,
Gloria, In excelsis Deo.

Narrator 6:

Candles and lights remind us that Christ came as the "Light of the World."

Scripture 6:

John 8:12 "Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, 'I am the **light of the world**. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.'" [*Turn on tree lights at this point.*]

Choir 6: This Little Christian Light of Mine

This little Christian light of mine,
I'm gonna' let it shine.
This little Christian light of mine,
I'm gonna' let it shine.
This little Christian light of mine,
I'm gonna' let it shine.
Let it shine all the time, let it shine.

Narrator 7:

Bells were sewn on the hem of the garments of the high priest of the Temple. When the people heard the tinkling of the bells they knew that the High Priest was in the holy of holies offering sacrifices for their sins. Jesus offered Himself in **sacrifice** for our sins. The bell has a tongue. We, too, have a tongue. We are to go preach the Gospel to all nations.

Scripture 7:

Mark 16:15-16 "And He said the them, 'Go unto all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned.'"

OR

1 Corinthians 5:7 "For indeed Christ, our Passover, was **sacrificed** for us."

Choir 7: "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

Narrator 8:

Throughout the Bible we read about **Sheep and the Lamb of God**. Jesus is the "Lamb of God."

Scripture 8:

John 1:29 "And the next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Behold! **the Lamb of God** who takes away the sin of the world.'"

Choir 8: Silent Night - 3rd verse

Silent night, Holy night,
Son of God, loves pure light,
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Narrator 9:

Candy canes remind us of the shepherd's crook that the shepherd uses to bring his sheep back into the flock. Jesus is the Good **Shepherd** who brings us back to God. [*Narrator holds up a crook/cane.*]

Scripture 9:

John 10:11 "I am the good **shepherd**. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep."

OR

Psalm 23: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul; he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yet, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Choir 9: The First Noel

The first Noel than angel did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay.
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel, noel, noel, noel,
Born is the King of Israel.

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