

He Is Here

A Musical for Christmas

DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

by Nan Allen

“EMMANUEL MEDLEY (OPENER)”

The opening medley includes two beloved Christmas carols and one equally loved modern chorus. All three speak to the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

“Angels, from the Realms of Glory” pretty much covers the entire Nativity story. Read the lyrics to the three verses included in this medley, and identify the three elements of this beautiful story. Read Luke 2:8-16 and recall the biblical account of the angels.

The second verse of the hymn speaks of other witnesses to the presentation of the Messiah. Of whom does it speak? Read Luke 2:8-12 again and note their reactions. There are two main emotions here. What are they?

Read the third verse of this hymn. Then read Matthew 2:1-7. Who was the third group of visitors to see the young Jesus? We’ll read more about them later in these devotions.

The second song in this medley is “What Child Is This.” This carol also speaks of three sets of witnesses to the coming of the King. What attributes do these verses give to Jesus?

“Emmanuel” is a simple, but powerful, chorus written by Bob McGee in 1976. Read the lyrics, and then read the story about King Ahaz in Isaiah 7:1-9. Verses 10-14 record Isaiah’s answer to Ahaz’s fears. What sign would God send to dispel these fears? (Don’t get bogged down in the spelling of the word. Sometimes it is spelled with an “I” and sometimes an “E,” depending on which translation of the Bible you choose.)

“WONDERFUL COUNSELOR”

Read Isaiah 9:6. It is from this famous Messianic prophecy that the lyric to the song is crafted. A beautiful promise! Read the preceding verses and ask God to help you understand its meaning. Find the conflict and then the resolution in these passages.

Optional Activity: Interview a counselor or lawyer about the role that he or she has in bringing justice and healing to light. How does Jesus fit this role as our Wonderful Counselor?

“MY SOUL MAGNIFIES THE LORD”

Find the context for this song in Luke 1:46-55. Sometimes called the Magnificat (Latin for “my soul magnifies”), this is considered Mary’s praise to God just after the angel appeared to her with the news that she would give birth to His Son. Take it verse by verse and discuss it among your group. What does Mary seem to be saying about God? What are the reasons she is praising God? What attributes of God does she mention in these verses?

Read a similar praise from another mother-to-be in 1 Samuel 2:1-10. What similarities and differences are there between the two women?

How are their songs of praise similar or different?

“ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH”

The chorus to this great hymn, “Gloria in excelsis Deo,” is Latin for “Glory to God in the highest.” Who first spoke these words in the Bible’s Nativity story? Find it in Luke 2:14.

Are there things for which you can say “Glory to God in the highest” right now? Name them—as many as you can!

“REJOICE WITH EXCEEDING GREAT JOY”

The story of the wise men coming to Bethlehem to worship the Christ child is found in only one chapter in the Bible: Matthew 2. Read the last half of the narrative found in verses 9-11.

For what were these men searching? What led them in their search? What did they find? What did they do when they found it?

“GOD IS WITH US”

This beautiful contemporary song has a powerful message. The perspective changes from verse one to verse two. The first verse seems to be set back in biblical times, at the time of Jesus’ birth. What about the second verse? What is the setting for this song?

Read Deuteronomy 31:6, Joshua 1:5, and Isaiah 42:16. What do these passages have in common? How do these relate to the song “God Is with Us”? How do you react to these promises of God?

“HE IS HERE”

It’s been over two thousand years since Jesus’ birth. How can we say that He is here? What did Jesus promise would come after He went back to heaven after His death, burial, and resurrection? Read about it in John 14:15-31 and John 16:5-24. How does this explain Jesus’ presence with us today?