

Family Christmas Play Intro

What Ultimately Counts at Christmas is Jesus

By Carolyn Edwards

This is a play for the whole family to join in, and is based around the numbers 1 to 10.

You can do it with as few as two people or as many as you like.

Parts

The narrator parts should be read by fairly confident readers while other readers can take the parts of 'counters'. Everyone can join in miming the story as it is told.

There are four narrators, A, B, C and D. Divide these between the narrators equally. There are also four 'counters' so divide up those parts in the same way.'

The characters parts can be played by as few as two people, with the same people taking different roles in each scene. If you have more people acting, you can have an inn keeper plus more shepherds, angels and wise men.

Stage instructions are and opportunities to tailor the script to your own family situation are in [square brackets]. (You might want to go through and tailor the script in advance.) Don't feel you have to do all the instructions, but rather use them as prompts to help you make your family version.

The numbers

If possible, make ten numbers to be held up at the appropriate times. These could be as simple as 1-10 in felt tip pen on A4

paper. To make them more interesting, cut the numbers out of old wrapping paper and glue them onto card or make a copy of the numbers on page 23.

Non-readers can also be in charge of the numbers, either holding them up or shouting them out at the appropriate times.

Script

You can make copies of these pages (or print them from www.GodVenture.co.uk) so everyone has a script. Use a highlighter on each copy to show each person which are their lines.

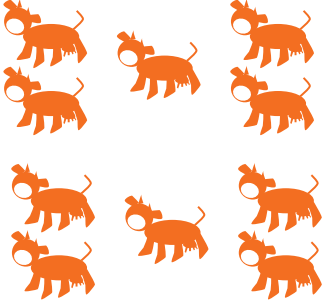

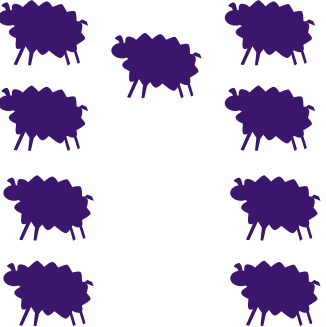
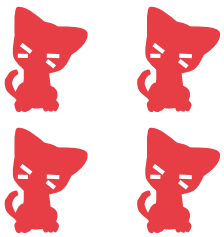
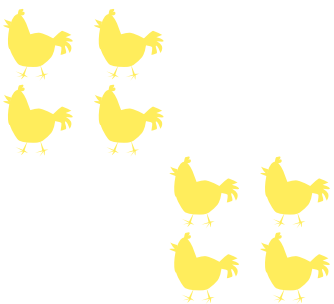
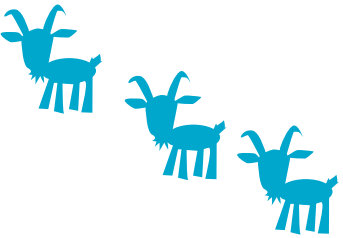
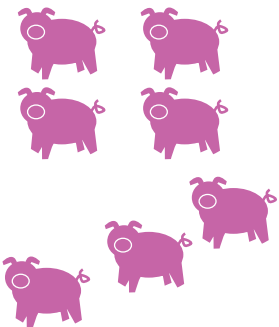
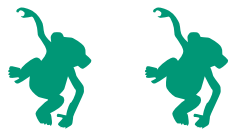

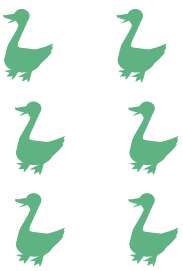

Optional props:

- large numbers
- blue shawl/scarf
- bag/suitcase
- tea towels/headscarves for Joseph, innkeeper and shepherd(s)
- doll wrapped in a sheet
- angel wings and tinsel halos
- crowns and gifts
- a star on a stick

When you've done your play at home, you could:

- invite another family to come and join in.
- show to members of your wider family, community or small group.
- do a presentation at a local old people's home or homeless shelter.

Prompts for Counters

 <p>10 COWS</p>	 <p>5 sparrows</p>
 <p>9 sheep</p>	 <p>4 kittens</p>
 <p>8 chickens</p>	 <p>3 goats</p>
 <p>7 piglets</p>	 <p>2 monkeys?</p>  <p>2 mice</p>
 <p>6 geese</p>	 <p>1 donkey</p>

Family Christmas Play

What Ultimately Counts at Christmas is Jesus

By Carolyn Edwards

Narrator A: It's Christmas time and we're counting down to Christmas

Counter A: 10 hours until I can open my stocking!

Narrator B: 10? Hmm, not too sure about your maths! How many is it really?

[Work out how many hours it really is until Christmas day.]

Counter B: 9 relatives coming to stay

Narrator C: 9? That's a lot! How many are really coming?

[Talk about how many relatives you will be seeing this Christmas.]

Counter C: 8 pounds of potatoes to peel

Narrator D: And carrots, and Brussels specially for...

[Name the person in the family who really likes/dislikes Brussels!]

Counter D: 7 chocolates left on the tree

[These can be replaced by any treat you traditionally have at Christmas.]

Narrator A: I'm sure there were more than that when we started!

Counter A: 6 presents to wrap.

Counter B: 5 films to watch.

Counter C: 4 mince pies for Santa.

Counter D: 3 turkeys to cook. (I think Mum went a bit mad!)

Narrator B: Not sure we're going to fit all three in the oven!

Counter A: 2 sets of fairy lights that refuse to work.

Counter B: 1 more chance to see the Sound of Music.

Everyone: *[general cheers or groans]*

Narrator C: But what ultimately counts at Christmas?

All Counters: 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

[If you have them, hold up the correct number at the right time. Have fun trying to do this faster and faster, so it looks like a Mexican wave.]

Narrator B: It is the year AD 0. Well, approximately. Over 2,000 years ago – when it all began.

Narrator C: The Roman Emperor Augustus wanted to know how many people were in his empire.

Narrator D: So everyone had to be counted.

[Narrator D pretends to have a clipboard and ticks everyone off as they file past during the counting.]

All Counters: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Narrator A: Stop! This was the Roman Empire, everyone had to be counted in Roman numerals.

Counters: Huh?!

Narrator A: i, i i, i i i, i v, v.

Narrator B: That's better. Everyone had to go to their home town to be counted.

Narrator C: Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's home town, and because Joseph was from David's family, he had to go to Bethlehem.

Narrator A: Mary was pregnant. She had been told by an angel that she was going to have a very special baby.

Narrator B: Not an ordinary baby, but God's own son, who was going to save the world.

Narrator C: When they got to Bethlehem, they looked for somewhere to stay.

Narrator D: They asked at...

[Mary and Joseph mime knocking at the ten doors, but everyone shakes their heads after each number is said.]

Everyone: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

Narrator A: Places, but there was no room for them anywhere and no one wanted them.

Narrator B: Eventually, someone said that they could stay in their animal shelter.

[Inn keeper welcomes them in.]

Narrator C: They bedded down with all sorts of animals who were sheltering for the night.

[Everyone does the sound effect for each animal as it is mentioned.]

Counter A: 10 cows.

Counter B: 9 sheep.

Counter C: 8 chickens.

Counter D: 7 piglets.

Counter A: 6 geese.

Counter B: 5 sparrows.

Counter C: 4 kittens.

Counter D: 3 goats.

Counter A: 2 monkeys.

Narrator D: Monkeys? I don't think so. How about some, erm, erm ... mice!

Counter A: 2 mice.

Counter B: And 1 donkey.

Narrator A: Gosh what a lot of animals! It must have been very noisy, very smelly and not very comfortable.

Narrator B: And that night Mary had her baby.

[Mary gets handed a doll wrapped in a sheet to cuddle.]

Narrator C: The creator of the world, became a small vulnerable child.

Narrator D: The ultimate king, who could have had anything, was born in an ordinary animal shelter, with ordinary people.

Everyone: Hoorah!

Family Christmas Play continued...

Narrator A: That night in the fields near Bethlehem, some shepherds were trying to stay awake by counting their sheep.

[Shepherds mime sheep counting.]

Counters: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Narrator B: All at once an angel appeared.

Narrator C: And the brightness of God's glory flashed around them.

[Angel stands in front of shepherds, who look scared.]

Narrator D: The shepherds were terrified. But the angel said:

Narrator A: Don't be afraid! I have good news that will make everyone happy. Today a Saviour was born for you. You will find him wrapped in cloths and lying in a bed of hay.

Narrator B: Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven, and joined in praising God.

Counters: 1 thousand, 2 thousand, 3 thousand, 4 thousand, 5 thousand, 6 thousand, 7 thousand, 8 thousand, 9 thousand, 10 thousand!

Narrator C: Angels! The sky was alive with angels, singing and praising God and saying 'Peace on earth to everyone who pleases God'.

Narrator A: When the angels had gone, the shepherds said to each other:

[Shepherds mime discussion and then run off to Bethlehem, perhaps a few times round the room first!]

Narrator B: Let's go to Bethlehem and see what God has told us about.

Narrator C: The shepherds found Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus lying in a bed of hay.

[If the same people are playing shepherds and Mary and Joseph, then they can find the doll, and cuddle it. If not, then the shepherds can kneel by Mary and Joseph.]

Narrator D: When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Herod was king.

[Crown Herod on the other side of the room from where the baby Jesus is.]

Narrator A: Some wise men came from the East, because they had seen his star rise and had come to worship him.

[Wise men parade towards Herod following the star on a stick.]

Counters: 1 wise man, 2 wise men, 3 wise men.

Narrator B: Well actually the Bible doesn't say how many, we just know that they brought with

them, three very special gifts.
Narrator C: When the wise men arrived in Jerusalem they went to the palace to ask Herod.

[Herod and wise men mime the discussion.]

Narrator D: King Herod was very worried.
Narrator A: He asked the chief priests where the new king would be.
Narrator B: The chief priests looked at all the promises God had made about a Saviour and told the wise men to go to Bethlehem.
Narrator C: The star went ahead of them and stopped over the place where Jesus was.

[Wise men travel across the room to the baby Jesus.]

Narrator D: They saw Jesus with Mary, and knelt down and worshipped him.
Narrator A: They took out their gifts and gave them to the special child.
Narrator B: Gold to show that Jesus is the Ultimate King.
Narrator C: Frankincense to show that Jesus is the Ultimate God.
Narrator D: Myrrh to show that Jesus would make the Ultimate sacrifice for everyone.

[Wise men kneel and give the baby their gifts.]

All Counters: 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004,

2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010.

Narrator A: Countless years have passed since that first Christmas.

Narrator B: Countless armies have marched to war.

Narrator C: Countless books have been written.

Narrator D: Countless politicians have made countless laws.

Narrator A: But none of them has affected the world as much as the birth of this one man.

Everyone: 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

Narrator B: So what are we counting down to this Christmas?

Counters: Opening my stocking!
relatives coming to stay,
Christmas dinner,
chocolates on the tree,
presents,
films,
mince pies,
turkey,
fairy lights,
the Sound of Music!

Narrator A: Yes, we are counting down to all of these things, but we've also taken some time out to remember where it all started because what ultimately counts at Christmas is knowing,

Everyone: Jesus!