

# t<sub>he</sub> Chalkboard

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## The Sights and Sounds of Christmas

Christmas is a Christian celebration filled with great meaning. It is a season in which we commemorate God's salvation plan – the birth of our Savior in a lowly stable. What could be more exciting than to share this beautiful story with children each year? It is rich with illustration, activity, and dialogue. Children can learn the true meaning of Christmas by simply hearing the story read aloud from the Bible. But they will gather and retain even more understanding if they are encouraged to use all five senses: seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling. Many of the familiar Christmas traditions naturally appeal to our five senses. First, church plays and pageants delight our sense of sight. The importance of Christ's birth is brought to life through drama and role play. Next, nothing sounds sweeter to our ears than hearing a chorus of children singing Christmas carols like "Away in a Manger." During this special season, a variety of foods are shared which tempt our taste buds. The child in all of us enjoys sugary cookies and peppermint candy canes. We also use our sense of touch as we warmly embrace our family and friends. Not to mention, the scratchy cloth we wear to resemble poor shepherds. Finally, we enjoy the scent of candles which reminds us of Christ, the light of the world, or we may even be disgusted by the smell of straw filling the wooden manger. Indeed, our human senses help us to experience the significance of Christmas.

In Luke chapter two, the shepherds **heard** the announcement that the Savior had been born from a choir of heavenly angels. The shepherds said to one another, "*Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us*" (Luke 2:15). Without delay, they searched for the stable and found Mary and Joseph with the baby who was lying in a manger. "*And when they had **seen** it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this*

*child*" (Luke 2:17). Then the shepherds returned "*glorifying and praising God for all the things which they had **heard and seen***" (Luke 2:20). They heard the angels. They came to the manger. They saw the babe. They glorified God!

This year, as you celebrate Christ's birth, rejoice with the shepherds for all that you hear, see, and experience. Do not become overwhelmed by the preparation of seasonal activities. Instead, remember that you are creating a lasting memory for each child in your local ministry. He will never forget playing the role of a rowdy shepherd or a wise man in a fancy robe. Each little girl will cherish the feeling of wearing a soft pair of angel wings and a tinsel halo. Every event should reinforce the real meaning of Christmas and lead a child to true faith in Christ.



### Ideas to Illuminate: Five Senses Celebration

Prepare a variety of activities which encourage children to use all five senses. Set up separate areas of a room with an adult leading each activity. For example, begin in a corner with a reading of the story of Christ's birth. Move to another area with a manger where the children can touch the swaddling clothes or the wool of a sheep (real or pretend). Then visit a spot where the children can glue smelly spices on paper cut-outs of the wise men's frankincense jars. Next, sit on a cloud to sing the songs of the angels. Finally, end the event by making a snack to taste together such as butterscotch haystacks or star-shaped sugar cookies.

### Chalk Talk:

Let's talk. I want to hear from you. How do you celebrate Christmas with the children in your local ministry? E-mail your ideas to [youngdisciples@att.net](mailto:youngdisciples@att.net).

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