

It's Jesus' Birthday!!

By Fr. Dan Kovalak

Setting: The setting is a common room where all are gathered around a Christmas tree.

Players: Little children may be seated as observers to sing. Two students begin the action. Nine students hold wrapped gifts (see props). *[Number of gifts may be adjusted to accommodate number of students.]* After they open their respective gifts and say their lines, they can place their presents under the tree and return to their places.

Props: Gifts to be wrapped and given in order by respective students are:

a clock

a wallet

a coupon book marked 'LOVE'

A Bible

a hammer

knee pads

a calendar

A Liturgy book

Scroll with Ten Commandments

A birthday cake (real or artificial)

Beginning: As the play begins, little children are seated on the floor together with students [with wrapped gifts]. S1 and S2 roll in the birthday cake on a cart and lead the singing of "*Happy Birthday to Jesus*".

S1: It's time for the party!

S2: We've got the cake. You've got the presents.

S1: [to children] Who likes to celebrate birthdays?

Children: WE DO! WE DO!

S2: And guess whose birthday is on December 25th?

Children: JESUS! JESUS!

S1: That's right. God loves us so much that about 2,000 years ago, He sent His Son into the world.

S2: 2,000 years is a lot of birthdays to celebrate!

S1: God became man in Jesus. Do you remember the story?

S2: It happened in the little town of Bethlehem -- not Bethlehem Pennsylvania but Bethlehem in Israel!

S1: The shepherds heard angels, the wise men brought gifts, and a bright star pointed to the manger.

S2: The Virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus in a barn because there wasn't any room at the Hampton.

S1: There was no Hampton back then!

S2: Whatever.

S1: And people have been celebrating Jesus' birthday ever since. Pretty awesome isn't it?

S2: Think of the pile you'd have with 2,000 years worth of presents!

S1: Well, that's what THIS party's about. Instead of giving presents to each other, we're going to give presents to Jesus.

S2: Why not? How'd you like it if somebody else got presents on YOUR birthday! Let's sing a song about this!

CHORUS

S1: Alright. Let the gift-giving begin! Who's gonna start?

S3: I will. [unwrap clock]

S2: It's a clock! What kinda present is that?

S3: We're sometimes way too busy
in activities and talk,
and so I give to Jesus,
the present of a clock!

Of all the things to give to God,
this doesn't cost a dime.

It only costs minutes and hours
in the valuable gift of time.

No matter how much we have or don't,
one thing we all can give,
are some of the hours we have each day
to God Who helps us live.

S1: Nice one!

S2: And it's digital! How contemporary!

S1: Now, who's next?

S4: I am! [unwrap wallet]

S2: Got any credit cards in there?

S4: For my last two birthdays,
that went just like a flash,
I asked my parents for just one thing;
nothing else but cash!

I've got enough games and underwear, and plenty of books to read.

So with my birthday money,
I was able to help those in need.

Jesus teaches us to love
our neighbor as our brother,
so with this Christmas gift to Him

I know He'll help another.

S1: Good thinking!

S2: That can buy food for the hungry!

S1: Time and money. Pretty awesome presents!

S2: Things we all can give.

S1: Who's next?

S5: Me! Me! [unwrap coupon book]

S1: What kinda book is that?

S2: Looks like some coupons!

S5: This booklet I have entitled LOVE I wrote as you can see,
every page includes a coupon,
a promise made by me.

One says "I won't complain today", another "I'll do a chore".
Certainly I can do these things
if not a little more.

Why is this a gift for Jesus?
'Cause Love it seems to me,
is doing things without being asked; That's how He wants me to be.

S1: Those are good; especially for parents! Got a coupon there for a discount at the Gap?

S2: To use a coupon, you have to redeem it. That's a pretty good present for the Redeemer of the whole world!

CHORUS

S1: These are all very good presents for Jesus.

S2: Who's got another one?

S6: I do! [unwrap a Bible]

S1: Looks like a book.

S2: Yeah, the Best Book!

S6: I'd like to give Jesus a Bible;
it's like a scrapbook of all He did.
With parables and miracles,
the Gospel shows how He lived.

More than this, the Bible tells
how people often stray,
from living how God taught us;
That's why Jesus is called "The Way."

In giving Him a Bible,
I promise I will read it!
But even more importantly,
I'll also try to heed it!

S1: Did you know the word "Bible" means "the bookS"? How many books are in it?

S2: We learned that there are 22 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. That's a lot of books!

S1: [to S7] That looks like a strange present!

S2: Unwrap it so we can see what it is.

S7: [unwraps gift]: It's a hammer!

All: A hammer!

S7: Jesus was raised like you and me
in a world that's sometimes cruel,
so to honor Joseph who helped to raise Him,
I'm giving Him this tool.

There weren't computers or gameboys then,
so what did children do?
They worked at home with their families
and always learned something new.

Joseph was a carpenter
so Jesus quickly found,
He could make things by measuring and cutting boards,
and finding some nails to pound.

S1: Jesus could've been a builder.

S2: He was! He 'built' the Church, didn't He?!

S1: Who's next?

S8: I guess I am.

S2: And what present did you bring for Jesus?

S8: [opens knee pads]

S1: What in the world are those?

S2: Looks like big sponges or something.

S8: These are knee pads I bought from Sears
'cause I am into sports,
and usually at practice,
all we wear are shorts.

These pads are to protect my knees

from getting hurt when I play,
but after thinking about it,
you can also use them when you pray.

Jesus was not just a baby,
He's God Who everyone sees,
So like the shepherds and the wise men, I worship Him on my knees!

S1: Good present! My dad has bad knees. I should get him some of these.

S2: He must pray a lot!

CHORUS

S1: Who else brought a present for Jesus?

S9: I've got one.

S2: Let's see it!

S9: [unwrap Liturgy book]

It's another book but a thinner one than the one you saw before,
it's what we use for the Liturgy
with a bookmark at Tone Four.

"Christ our God is risen" it says, "death is overthrown".
In fact there are prayers just like this,
in every single tone.

We may not think of the Liturgy
as a present, but it is.

It's how we are able to unite with Jesus throughout the world that's His!

S1: That's a gift that keeps on giving!

S2: Yeah, every Sunday and Holy Day.

S1: All these wonderful presents and still there's more!

S2: Here comes another one.

S10: [unwrap calendar]

To follow Jesus is to try to be like Him in every single way.
So I thought of this gift of a calendar where every day is His day.

As we Christians look forward to Christmas,
as the birthday of Jesus comes near,
the calendar reminds us to remember Him,
365 days a year!

Two thousand birthdays for Jesus, every calendar quickly goes.
Before we know it comes Pascha,
the day on which He rose!

S1: Good job. Sometimes people forget that Christmas is not just a holiday -- but a holy day!

S2: Yeah, and no school!

S1: I see another present just waiting to be given.

S2: Jesus is going to need a truck for all these gifts!

S11: [unwrap Ten Commandments]

The Ten Commandments are on this page,
I give to Jesus today.
'Cause if we really love God and each other,
these are laws we must obey.

Of all the presents to give Him:
beside the books and tools.
We show our love for Jesus as God
by keeping all His rules.

It's not as easy as many think,
in fact it's pretty hard.
So following the Ten Commandments beats
just sending a Christmas card!

S1: Aaaaaaaa-men! I wonder how many actually know all Ten Commandments?!

S2: Well, it's not like they aren't written down!

CHORUS

S1: There've been some very thoughtful presents for Jesus here.

S2: It's only right. Like we've been saying, it's HIS birthday!

S1: And if we think about it, we only give presents at Christmas to remind us Who gave the first Christmas present.

S2: And just Who might that be?

S1: Why, God, of course! He gave us the gift of His Son. And through Jesus, He gives us things that can't be wrapped; like forgiveness, mercy, and love.

S2: You'd need a box the size of the moon for all that.

S1: Here are the words to one of the songs we sing in Church about Christmas giving. **"What shall we offer Thee, O Christ, Who for our sakes hast appeared on earth as man? Every creature made by Thee offers Thee thanks. The angels offer Thee a song; the heavens, a star; the Magi, gifts; the shepherds, their wonder; the earth, its cave; the wilderness, the manger; and we offer Thee a Virgin Mother. O pre-eternal God, have mercy upon us".**

S2: There's something to think about.

S1: I never thought of the Theotokos as a Christmas present, did you?

S2: She's the perfect gift that mankind offered to God. Makes sense to me.

S1: Birthdays are special to our parents too! We wouldn't be here without them!

S2: Just like Jesus couldn't have been born without the Virgin Mary!

S1: I hope we've all learned at this party that this gift-giving thing at Christmas is really a lot more than just getting stuff.

S2: It sure is! And I think all the presents given to Jesus today will help remind us that Christmas is not just about us but about Him.

S1: Let's all sing the chorus one more time!

CHORUS

All: CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

APPENDIX

It's Jesus Whose Birthday It Is!

(with a single narrator)

S1: It's time for the party! We've got the cake. You've got the presents. [to children] Who likes to celebrate birthdays?

Children: WE DO! WE DO!

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Children: JESUS! JESUS!

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It happened in the little town of Bethlehem -- not Bethlehem Pennsylvania but Bethlehem in Israel! The shepherds heard angels, the wise men brought gifts, and a bright star pointed to the manger. The Virgin Mary gave birth to Jesus in a barn because there wasn't any room at the inn. And people have been celebrating Jesus' birthday ever since.

Pretty awesome isn't it? Think of the pile you'd have with 2,000 years worth of presents! Well, that's what THIS party's about. Instead of giving presents to each other, we're going to give presents to Jesus. Why not? How'd you like it if somebody else got presents on YOUR birthday! Let's sing a song about this!

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It only costs minutes and hours
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No matter how much we have or don't,
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I've got enough games and underwear, and plenty of books to read.
So with my birthday money,
I was able to help those in need.

Jesus teaches us to love
our neighbor as our brother,
so with this Christmas gift to Him
I know He'll help another.

S1: Good thinking! That can buy food for the hungry! Time and money. Pretty awesome presents! Things we all can give. Who's next?

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'Cause Love it seems to me,
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S1: Those are good; especially for parents! Got a coupon there for a discount at the Gap? You know, to use a coupon, you have to redeem it. That's a pretty good present for the Redeemer of the whole world!

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Joseph was a carpenter
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**S1: Jesus could've been a builder. After all, He 'built' the Church, didn't He?!
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'cause I am into sports,
and usually at practice,
all we wear are shorts.

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you can also use them when you pray.

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He's God Who everyone sees,
So like the shepherds and the wise men, I worship Him on my knees!

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(continued)

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