

# Missionary Message of Christmas

(Note.—The following service is arranged as an Open Christmas Meeting, to which every member of the congregation is to be invited, and in which the Juniors are to have a prominent part. If you have no Junior League, use your Sunday School boys and girls who ought to be in a Junior League. Follow the programme and you may have a splendid service. See to it that the parts are allotted and well prepared beforehand.—Ed.)

## PROGRAMME.

Hymn—Methodist Hymn Book, No. 111.

The Lord's Prayer in concert.

Recitation—Methodist Hymn Book, No. 141.

Singing—Hymn 145.

Prayer.

Scripture Lesson—Luke 2: 8-20.

Recitation in unison (by all Juniors), to be memorized before the meeting—

"What shall we bring as a Christmas gift?

What shall we, then, bring to Jesus? We have no gold like the men of old; How shall we then win His favor?

"These will we bring to our Lord and King—

Hearts full of gladness and true;  
Hail to the King! Praises we sing,  
These are our offerings to Jesus."

Reading—"Freely Giving."

A very suggestive story is told of a little boy whose uncle gave him a gold coin.

"Now you must keep that," said the gentleman.

"I will halve it first," said the child.

"Maybe I will keep my half."

"Why, it is all yours, my boy," said his uncle, greatly astonished.

"No," replied the little fellow, with a determined shake of his head, "it is not all mine; I always go halves with God."

"But God owns the world; the gold and silver are all His."

The little boy was silent and puzzled a moment, then he said: "Anyways, God goes halves with us; He lets us share with Him. Don't you think we ought to give Him back a part?"

Hymn 142.

Recitation—A Christmas Carmen (see front cover).

Hymn 143.

Recitation—"The Adoration of the Wise Men."

Saw you never in the twilight  
When the sun had left the skies,  
Up in heaven the clear stars shining  
Through the gloom like silver eyes?

So of old the Wise Men watching  
Saw a little stranger star,  
And they knew the King was given,  
And they followed it from afar.

Heard you never of the story,  
How they cross'd the desert wild,  
Journey'd on by plain and mountain,  
Till they found the Holy Child?

How they open'd all their treasure,  
Kneeling to that Infant King,  
Gave the gold and fragrant incense,  
Gave the myrrh in offering?

Know ye not that lowly Baby  
Was the bright and morning star,  
He who came to light the Gentiles,  
And the darken'd isles afar?

And we too may seek His cradle,  
There our heart's best treasures bring,  
Love, and faith, and true devotion,  
For our Saviour, God and King.

—Cecil Frances Alexander.

Topic—"The Missionary Message of Christmas.

The shepherds, when they had found the Holy Child, were eager to tell the glad news to others. How could they help it, when their hearts and memories were so full of the Christmas joy? They could not keep silent, for Christ the Lord was indeed born, His coming heralded a reign of love and blessing. And the birth of the "Little Babe of Bethlehem" meant so much to them that they hastened to repeat the angels' glad tidings of great joy, and to tell, over and over again, the story of that hurried trip to David's city, and the finding of the Christ-child.

And as the shepherds were rejoicing over the wonderful Advent, across the mountains and the desert plains, guided too by the radiance of the Star, came the Wise Men, counting not the weariness of the journey, as they search for the Infant King—a king truly in their thoughts, for so do their actions and their gifts show:

"The gold was their tribute to a king;  
The frankincense, with its odor sweet,  
Was for the Priest, the Paraclete,  
The myrrh for the body's burying."

The Christmas gladness leaves no place for malice, envy or hatred in the lives of Christ's people, and to-day, as they enter into the full joy of the Christian service, and especially at this happy season of the year, like the Wise Men of old, they may lay their best gifts before their King. To the poor and lowly, to the lonely and sad, our Epworth Leaguers should go on deeds of mercy, carrying with them the Christmas sunshine as they distribute their gifts and repeat the shepherds' story, and realizing that "he who gives himself with his gifts feeds three—himself, his hungry neighbor, and Me."

And it is in telling to those who have not heard the Story of the first glad Christmas, and of the thankfulness of the shepherds and the Wise Men, which found expression in their acts, because Christ was born, that the missionary message of peace and good-will toward all is being carried from land to land. Think for a minute what the meaning of the coming of Christ is to the Chinese, held so long in the bondage of superstition, who now rejoice in the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ! One can almost fancy hearing them say, "Oh, how wonderful is this 'Jesus Religion'!"

So the Missionary Message of Christmas comes directly to us all, and it is for us to offer our "best gifts" to the Saviour whose Birth was heralded by the Angels.

Hymn 108.

Recitation—Christmas Eve.

In the snow the lights are gleaming,  
From above the stars are beaming  
Through the cold;

And the year sighs in the blowing,  
And weeps softly in the snowing;  
He is old.

Merry music now is speeding,  
Now advancing, now receding,  
Through the air.

And a sound of Christmas pleasure  
Fills each joyful, thoughtful pleasure—  
Half a prayer.

And the youth and brown-eyed maiden,  
With their gifts of gladness laden,  
Soft and slow,

Tell the wondrous, ancient Story,  
Of the first great Christmas glory,  
Long ago!

Far o'er the mountain, mist and meadows,  
Through the centuries' gold-lined shadows,

Shines the Star!

Through the good-will and the sobbing  
Comes the music's joyous throbbing  
From afar.

And the angels seem a-whispering,  
'Mid the stars pale, silvery glistening,  
In the frost,

Of the good-will and the glory  
Coming down from dead years hoary—  
Heavenly host!

Is there wonder that all nations,  
From their wide-set signal stations  
All along

The great track of pain and sadness,  
Catch a glimpse of breaking gladness,  
Raise their song,

On this night when vows are plighted  
'Twixt the heavens and earth, united  
By one Love,

And the skies, with joy o'erflowing,  
Sent their clear-toned heralds glowing,  
From above?

As around the earth doth hover,  
And its stains lightly o'ercover,  
With its purity and beauty  
(The frost-angels' happy duties)  
Even so.

Let the good news of the morrow  
Cover o'er the old-time sorrow  
Near and far!

Let the clouds break into gladness!  
Let our lives shine with the brightness  
Of the Star!

Let the bells be set a-chiming,  
As the sunrise steeples up-climbing,  
Breaks the day!

For the Saviour of the sages  
Is the Saviour of the ages  
And always.

—Alden.

Christmas in Other Lands (By Seven Juniors).—"The Birthday of the Christ-child." (May be given as a dialogue, in tableaux, or in form of direct questions.) Information from "Children of the World."

1st Junior, Germany.—Above everything else, the boys and girls are taught to love the Christ-child. In many parts of Germany it is customary, on the morning of the day preceding Christmas, to let a figure, representing the Christ-child, wave past the window of the room where the little ones sleep. Only half-awake, in the grey of the morning, these

"It is much easier to be critical than to be correct."