



Anyone seen the shepherds?

Last minute help for choral music, church decorations, and Christmas Eve dramas

Heidi Griep

There seems to be more music and drama at Christmas than at any other time of the year. My friend Ginger can barely wait for Thanksgiving to start playing her large collection of Christmas CDs. In the church we see everything from large-scale Christmas plays to two-minute skits preceding the sermon. Whatever your gifts and interests, this Webwatch is designed to inspire and enable you as you plan your upcoming Christmas pageant, choir concert, and carol sing.

www.dramaministry.com

Description: What is Christmas without a Christmas play? Here is one site to check as you look for ways to make Christmas come alive in your church. This Christian drama website offers both membership and free resources. Membership gives you eight issues of a newsletter, unlimited access to a large

online library, director notes, acting exercises, music links, and pastor notes with related Scriptures and themes. A big advantage of this website is that you can try out membership and see if you like it before you pay.

Possible Uses: What are you going to do with those ten extra shepherds from the first-grade class? Cute as they are, do you have a plan if they pick their noses or shout out greetings to Grandpa while Mary and Joseph are singing their most touching ballad?

Rating: This is a well-designed website for churches and individuals who are serious about drama ministry. ★★★★★

www.dramashare.org

Description: Another stop for finding a Christmas play or drama, dramashare.org offers both membership and free resources. There is no free membership trial. This site also offers resources for writing scripts, makeup, lighting

and sound, mime, puppetry, clowning, choral reading, and interpretive movement.

Possible Uses: Find a script in Spanish or a puppet script for children's church.

Rating: The positive attributes of dramashare.org are that membership costs less than dramaministry.com and they have some scripts in Spanish. However, I didn't find the website itself very user-friendly or as well designed. ★★★

www.dave-marsh.com

Description: This website was created by Dave Marsh who has worked for Willow Creek Church. It offers more than fifty free Christian dramas that are relevant, short, and easy to memorize. Although the pay websites offer

ly cut tree. Both beautiful and informative, it is a wonderful site to visit. ★★★★★

www.rememberjosie.org/carols

Description: A pastor decided to help his choir prepare for services by creating this website. Called "An Online Christmas Songbook," this is a website for your non-copyrighted Christmas music needs. Find sheet music, tunes to listen to, and more. The sheet music prints clearly. There are also indexes by authors, composers, languages, and tunes. This is a very helpful online resource. (Note: This site is part of a larger personal website unrelated to Christmas.)

Possible Uses: Want to go caroling around the neighborhood or nursing home this



more scripts, these dramas are high quality. Marsh has also posted some MP3s that contain dialogue and sound effects for many of the sketches.

Possible Uses: Check out the Christmas drama, "Yea, Merry Christmas." It is well written, thought provoking, and could work well for a Christmas Eve seeker service.

Rating: This impressively designed personal website is a great gift to the church. ★★★★★

www.christmasmagazine.com

Description: This website has the feeling of a snowy old-fashioned Christmas. It is well designed and interesting. Some of the things you can find here are quality e-cards, very cute games like "Snowman," Christmas images for your website, and an Advent calendar. I particularly enjoyed some of the photography used to illustrate the site.

Possible Uses: Use this website to get creative ideas for Christmas decorations or get in the holiday spirit.

Rating: If this website were a place, you would be sitting with hot chocolate in front of a blazing fire smelling evergreen from the fresh-

Christmas? Is there a Christmas song that you need to sing but don't know? Hop online and print sheet music for carolers or learn the tunes by singing along with the midi (sound) file.

Rating: About the only graphical elements on this website are the songs. It's a simple website, but packed with Christmas music. ★★★★★

www.jojofalk.se/x-mas

Description: Being a big fan of well-done online Advent calendars, I was surprised I had not seen this one before. Created in 1998, this is one of the cutest online Advent calendars I have seen. Made by two young women, Nami Yashida from Japan and Jojo Falk from Sweden, the illustration is very fun and creative. You will also find a link to their e-cards here.

Possible Uses: Anticipate the days leading up to Christmas with this Advent calendar.

Rating: I am more and more amazed by what people do with their personal websites for free. This is a cute site both kids and adults will like. ★★★★★

Don't see a great site you think should be here?
Tell us about it—email
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