THE CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT

(Adapted from "A Christmas Candlelight Drama" by Melody Mosley Morris.)

LOGISTICS CHECKLIST
1. Accompaniment trax.
2. Songsheets of carols (Make as many copies as required).
3. A table (preferably the size of a 6-seater dining table).
4. Several books or small sturdy boxes to go under coverings creating 'hillsides' on the table.
5. One or more large, drab coverings for the table (one or more 3x1m length cloth, a very soft and dark plain cloth is preferred).
6. Candlelighter (a long candle., provided).
7. A thick 'cone-shaped' paper (with aluminum foil underneath) to extinguish flame.
8. Matches.
9. Candles (provided) to represent the characters in the story:
   - 7 yellow candles for The Angels
   - 3 purple candles for The Wise Men
   - 6 green candles for The Shepherds
   - 1 dark blue candle for Joseph
   - 1 light blue candle for Mary
   - 1 small white candle representing Baby Jesus
10. Paper cutout figures (attached as Page 51-55) to be placed in front of candles.
11. Script for the narrators.
12. Small candles with cardboard drip protectors for all members.
13. Creative dressing for children to be dressed up as Shepherds, Angels & Wisemen (Optional)

PREPARATION:
Place boxes or books on top of the big table with cloth coverings creating a "hillside" effect. Position the candles on the "hill". 'Cut-out' character figures should be placed in front of the candles to enhance the significance of each candle. Place the whole setup in an ideal location where everyone during the drama can see it.
PERSONNEL CHECKLIST:
1. Narrator 1.
3. A member to light and to extinguish the candles (candle-lighter).
4. A member to control the music.
5. A member to share his/her testimony.

PROGRAM AND SCRIPT
Gather the people together. Distribute songsheets and the candles with cardboard protectors to everyone. Have everyone sing the song #1, “O Come All Ye Faithful” as an introduction to the Main Program.

Narrator 1
Christmas is a time when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Today we’re going to sing some Christmas carols that will tell the Christmas story in a special way. Let us go back to 2000 years ago to witness the first Christmas.

One day the angel of the Lord appeared to Mary who was engaged to Joseph. The angel told her that she will conceive a son supernaturally. About this time, the emperor commanded that all Roman citizens must return to their home town to be registered. Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem. It was a very long journey for both of them. And Mary was about to give birth soon.

Let's sing song # 2: "O Little Town of Bethlehem".

Narrator 2
When they were in Bethlehem, Mary gave birth to her first child, a son. There was no place for them in the inn, so she laid him in a manger.

Let’s sing song # 3: “Away in a Manger”.

Light Joseph and Mary candles.
Light Christ candle.
Narrator 1: That night some shepherds were guarding their sheep outside the village.

Let’s sing song # 4: "The First Noel".

Narrator 2 Suddenly angels appeared to the shepherds and all around them was very bright. They were afraid. But the angels said to the shepherds. “Do not be afraid. I have good news for you. This night Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Go and see Him. Jesus is wrapped in cloth and is lying in a manger.”

Light the tallest angel candle.

Narrator 1 Suddenly, a huge number of angels appeared praising God saying, “Give glory to God in Heaven, and on earth let there be peace to the people that please God.”

Let’s sing song # 5: "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”.

Narrator 2 The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem to see what the angels had told them. At about the same time three wise men saw a bright star in the east. They followed the star all the way to Bethlehem. The star stopped over the manger where Jesus was. The three wise men knew they had found Jesus and were very happy. They went to the manger and saw baby Jesus with his mother Mary. They fell on their knees and worshipped Jesus. And they gave him gifts of incense, gold and myrrh.

Light wise men candles.

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Let’s sing song # 6: “What Child Is This”.

Narrator 1
Then, since they were warned in a dream not to return to Herod, the wise men went back to their own country by a different route.

Extinguish wise men candles.

While extinguishing the candles each time, have the ‘actors’ move quietly away from the stage.

Narrator 2
And the shepherds went back to work, glorifying and praising God for everything they had seen and heard.

Extinguish shepherd candles.

Narrator 1
And the angels returned to heaven.

Extinguish angel candles.

And many years later, Mary and Joseph died.

Extinguish Mary and Joseph candles.

Narrator 2
But the Light that began in Bethlehem was life. And this life was the Light of all humanity. The Light still shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never put it out.

And it all began on a silent, holy night, long ago ………

Let’s sing song # 7: “Silent Night, Holy Night”.

Alternate the stanzas with male and female singing.

Note: As the people are singing, Narrator 1 comes to light a small candle from the flame of the Christ candle. The flame is passed from candle to candle. Singing continues until all candles are lit.
Let’s sing song # 8: “O Holy Night”.

Narrator 1

Jesus Christ, being the Light still shines today and is living in the hearts of those who believe in His name. In a short while, the flame in our hands will be extinguished. However, to those who have received Him, we know that the light of Christ still lives in our hearts.

I have personally received this gift of light and so have all of us who invited you to tonight’s Christmas celebration. I want (name of member) to come and share with us what it means to him/her to have received this gift of God’s Light.

SHARING OF TESTIMONY

Member should begin by saying, “Christmas is a special time to me because of the joy of having received God’s gift of love. Because of Jesus, my life has been changed ……”

Narrator 1

From the sharing we know that God is a personal God. The Bible tells us that God loves everyone and has given us His only Son so that everyone who believes in Jesus will not perish but have eternal life. His invitation to you this Christmas is for you to receive His gift of love. He wants to come into your heart, and He will when you open your heart to Him. The gift is only truly yours when you make a decision to receive it. I would like you to make this Christmas even more special by inviting Jesus into your life as your Lord and Savior. I would like everyone to bow our heads and close our eyes right now and I want to give you the opportunity to receive this gift of love from God by inviting Jesus Christ into your hearts. If this is what you would like to do, then I invite you to repeat this prayer after me.

At this point, get everyone to close their eyes and bow their heads and encourage them to follow the prayer with you.
“Lord Jesus, thank you that you love me and came 2000 years ago to give yourself to me. I acknowledge that I am a sinner in need of forgiveness for all my sins. Please forgive my sins. Right now, I invite you to come into my life to be my Saviour, Lord and King. Come into my life right now and help me to be the kind of person You want me to be. I will worship You and You only. Let me experience your love daily from now on. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen.”

Let’s sing song # 9: “Joy to the World”.

As we end tonight’s program, I would like for us to pair up with one another so that we may share a little more with you and also that we may pray God’s blessings upon you and your family.

Cell members to share their personal testimony and John. 3:16 and also to check if the guest prayed the sinner’s prayer.

Special Note:
The narrator and candlelighter should rehearse the presentation several times prior to the actual day. It is critical that the candlelighter knows the cues for lighting the candles, as it is nearly impossible for that person to gracefully refer to a script.

The candlelighter should also feel comfortable moving around the mini stage to light the various groups of candles. At the end of the presentation, the candlelighter should be standing to one side of the stage and not at the back-center position.

Do ensure proper ventilation as the lighted candles may cause the room to be a little warm and stuffy.

Feel free to be creative, involve particularly the children and your guests.