

# A CHRISTMAS SPACE ODYSSEY

## A story of hope

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**Concept:** *A Christmas Space Odyssey; the end of the beginning* is an ideal Christmas show for local churches or youth groups of all sizes to perform. It is the first in the *Christmas Space Odyssey* trilogy and launches the tale that is continued in *Odyssey #2* and *Odyssey #3*. It has an engaging story line with plenty of humour and a moving climax. The gospel is clearly portrayed in a non-threatening, inviting manner.

The play is scripted in a unique fashion so that while the narrative is carried by the six main characters it is interspersed with song, dance and testimony by other performers, including children and young people. This makes it possible for almost everyone in the congregation to participate in the production if they choose. The performance involves carols, songs, dancing and testimonies blended together with the main narrative and video screen images. Some solos and duets may be sung by the actors but mostly they are selected so that other artists can perform them. The choice depends on the local talent.

*Samaria Story* ('Sam') is a woman with a deep regret in her life who needs to find an answer. Her name is derived from John 4:7-26.

*Philogian Areopagus* ('Phil') is an easy-going skeptic, rather like your average Aussie male. His first name is based on the Greek words for love and reason; his surname is found in Acts 17:16-21.

*Agatha Ergon* ('Aggie'). An enthusiastic but sometimes insensitive flight attendant. The full name means 'good work'.

*Felix Hedon*, flight attendant. He is happy-go-lucky, self-centred, but easy going. His name derives from the Latin for 'happy' and the Greek for 'pleasure'.

*Imeldon Maximus Ambrose Saint* or Imelda Maxima Ambrosia Saint. A comedy male or female character who gives inappropriate gifts.

**Aim:** To bring people to a point of response to the gospel by taking them step by step through the Christmas story.

**Involvement:** There are opportunities for a range of people to take part, either behind-the-scenes or as performers, especially those who are not usually involved in up-front ministry. In this way, many people can be involved without having to commit themselves to major roles. This makes this performance ideal for a local church to produce. Some solos and duets can be sung by the actors but mostly they don't need to be. Other artists can perform them. This enables many people to be involved and lessens the load on the

main performers. Some songs are allocated to actors but if they are not singers, and unless the songs are integrated directly with the script, other people can perform the songs.

**Venue:** The show is suitable for performance in a local church or a local hall where there are limited resources. Stage directions can be modified as needed according to the facilities.

**Presentation:** The performance is mainly live but also involves multi-media. This adds variety and contemporary relevance. The multi-media can be simple (words of carols on screen) or more complex (pictures, graphics etc), depending on available personnel and equipment. Stage directions can be modified as needed according to the facilities.

**Costumes:** All costume needs to be modest and appropriate. Costuming can be simple and inexpensive. Producers and designers should feel free to use their imagination, according to their budgets. The following are suggestions of costumes that should not be too costly. Of course, costumes can also be hired if preferred. Cosmetic facial treatment is advisable.

- *Samaria and Philogian:* smart tracksuits, preferably of shiny polyester or similar, with appropriate symbols of authority such as shoulder insignia, aiguillettes and/or lanyards. Perhaps also short capes. If preferred, gowns or kaftans could be worn.
- *Space crew:* smart tracksuits, preferably in shiny polyester or similar, with insignia of stars and/or other symbols large enough to be identified by the audience.
- *Singers:* Red and green t-shirts or polos shirts with black slacks.
- *Children:* Red and/or green t-shirts, black pants and pixie hats.
- *Dancers:* Whatever is comfortable for the relevant dance.

**Music:** The instrumental music can be pre-recorded if preferred or performed live. Many of the songs are traditional carols, which are expected in a Christmas show, especially by non-churched people, most of whom will find them familiar. They also give people the opportunity to sing along if they wish. In some cases the choice of songs is left to the local team to choose. Note that some copyright permissions may be needed. See copyright information at the end of the script.

**Timing:** Two and a half hours including a 25-minute interval.

**Response:** Response cards can be prepared beforehand giving people the option of seeking further contact. Also local church members should be encouraged beforehand to use the occasion for further discussion or to invite people to church on Christmas Day. Leaflets to be available re the Christmas Day service.

**Props:** Because of the nature of the show, very few props are needed.

**Acknowledgement:** Please include the following acknowledgement in your printed program and/or on the screen:

*The Christmas Space Odyssey musical plays were written by Australian author, pastor and teacher Dr Barry Chant for use in local churches. They involve adults, young people and children, with plenty of sing-along music, humour, drama, pathos and even romance. And through them all the gospel is clearly presented.*

*You may download and print as many copies as you need of the scripts and productions notes from [www.barrychant.com](http://www.barrychant.com). Bible Studies, stories, poems, devotional readings, essays and other items are also freely available on the website for general use.*

Time	Item	Production notes
7.30	<p><b>A CHRISTMAS SPACE ODYSSEY</b></p> <p>A Story of Hope</p> <p>From far away Idolotron, Commander Samaria Story and Colonel Philogian Areopagus journey through time and space to visit planet Earth, accompanied by their flight stewards, Agatha Ergon and Felix Hedon.</p> <p>Their mission? To study religious practices in the land called Australia, and in particular the festival they call Christmas. What do Australians really believe? And what is this annual celebration really all about?</p> <p>Tonight we join Commander Story, Colonel Areopagus in their quest to unravel the mysteries of an Australian summer celebration...</p>	<p>These words appear on the screen moving through a background of stars (c.f. the introduction to the movie Star Wars). This backdrop will be used as a default throughout.</p>
7.35	<p>Samaria: (<i>Looking at her laptop screen.</i>) ‘Hm... This assignment is proving more interesting than I expected. When we left Idolotron, I anticipated a sophisticated, well-developed religious philosophy. But it seems these people are pretty primitive after all.</p> <p>Philogian: Yeah, I agree, Sam. At first I thought this Christmas festival was pretty straight forward, but if anything, the more I look into it, the more confused I am.</p> <p>Agatha (<i>eagerly</i>): Well, I think—</p> <p>S: Mm... It is a bit of mixture, Phil, I do agree, although it’s pretty clear they worship the sun and the sea...</p> <p>A: (Trying hard to get a word in) Quite right, Commander Story. If you look at their—Well, what I mean to say is... (Voice fades away as Samaria frowns with displeasure, raises a warning finger etc)</p> <p>P: I’m amazed at the way they consecrate themselves by anointing their bodies with oil and then lying prostrate on the beach before their sun-god. The days they call Saturday and Sunday must be holy days, because that’s when most people assemble on the beach for worship.</p> <p>A: Yes, Colonel Areopagus, you’d think they’d—</p> <p>S: Obviously, they’re willing to give their lives for the sun-god – or at the least to suffer for his sake. I mean, have you observed how they present their bodies as burnt</p>	<p>Actors appear on a scaffolding with spotlight on them, so that they seem to be suspended in mid-air over the stage as in the flight deck of a space ship.</p> <p>The scaffolding is about two metres high, three metres square, draped in black cloth with a metallic-painted ‘wall’ around the top about 600mm high, perhaps with small Christmas lights around it. Two laptops stand on the shelf on the side facing the audience. There is a ladder behind the scaffold for access.</p> <p>Screen pix of beach</p>

	<p>offerings before him?</p> <p>A: Certainly, Commander. In fact, anyone...who...</p> <p>P: And then how they throw themselves into the surf in a frenzied rite of ritual immersion. Symbolizes cleansing, I guess.</p> <p>S: Possibly. But it all looks a bit pointless, Phil, doesn't it? I mean how does this sort of thing really address deep emotional or spiritual needs?</p> <p>P: What are you talking about, Sam? They're happy aren't they?</p> <p>S: I suppose so. But how does spending hours on the beach fix up a broken or lonely heart? How does it mend a fractured relationship or break bad habits? I think people need more than this.</p> <p>P: Well, of course they do. But...</p> <p>S: Yeah, people need... they need something. I just wish I knew what it was.</p>	<p>scenes appear.</p> <p>Aggie frowns, turns her back and stands there with arms folded...</p> <p>Singers move into position. Soloist to stage centre. As soon as Sam finishes her last line the actors are left in darkness and the spotlight focuses on the singers.</p>
7.40	Soloist and singers. 'People need the Lord' ( <i>updated arrangement</i> )	
7.45	<p>P: So now where are we, Sam?</p> <p>A: Right here, Sir. In the flight deck.</p> <p>S: Agatha! Well, there's another form of burnt offering commonly made at this time of the year. All over the city, people gather in groups of a dozen or so, place pieces of meat from a slaughtered beast on an altar and offer them as a different kind of sacrifice to the sun-god.</p> <p>P: I note they also take drink offerings of a fermented amber beverage and which they pour freely into sacred vessels.</p> <p>S: Yes, and this is followed by a ritual meal in which they consume the offerings in great quantities.</p> <p>P: Have you been able to discover what they call this ritual?</p> <p>A: Of course we have, Colonel. Everyone knows that. Well, what I mean is, most people, that is... er... well, I mean... the word they use is barb-er-cue.</p> <p>P: Barbecue? Sounds like a line-up for a hair-cut. We'll need to investigate that one further.</p>	<p>Singers leave. Spotlight back on actors.</p> <p>Screen pix of barbecue.</p>

	<p>S: Actually, Phil, I'm more interested in that other group.</p> <p>P: Which group, Sam?</p> <p>S: You know, the atheists.</p> <p>A: Yes, the atheists. (<i>Looks at laptop.</i>) Here they are. They are the ones—</p> <p>S: ...who don't believe in the sun-god... Who for some obscure reason go inside closed buildings and gather in the darkness to sing songs and listen to speeches.</p> <p>P: Oh, you mean the people who are always going on about someone called Jesus? The ones they call Christians?</p> <p>S: Ah, yes, Jesus. I'm still trying to work out where he fits into all this</p> <p>A: Oh I can tell you that, Commander. I found an electronic file the other day—</p> <p>P: Didn't it all start thousands of years ago? In that funny little place called Bethlehem?</p>	<p>Screen pix of people in church.</p> <p>Singers move into position.</p>
7.46	Singers: 'Mary's Boy Child.'	Spotlight on singers. Lyrics appear on screen preceded by the words, 'Audience please join in singing.'
7.49	<p>A: Oh, there you are, Felix. (Felix staggers on stage rubbing his eyes, scratching his belly and yawning. The following dialogue needs to be pretty snappy in the first few lines.) Where have you been? I thought you must have slept in.</p> <p>F: Slept in what?</p> <p>A: You look like you slept in a laundry basket.</p> <p>F: Yeah, right on. I do feel pretty washed out. Ha ha. (<i>sarcastic laugh</i>).</p> <p>A: So...?</p> <p>F: So what?</p> <p>A: So tell me what happened.</p> <p>F: No.</p>	<p>Singers leave;</p> <p>Spotlight on Felix and Aggie who are on SC. Aggie is standing behind a desk with a laptop and various papers on it.</p>

	<p>A: No what?</p> <p>F: No, I won't.</p> <p>A: Why not?</p> <p>F: Why not change the subject?</p> <p>A: To what?</p> <p>F: For what?</p> <p>A: You mean what for?</p> <p>F: So what?</p> <p>A (<i>with a long sigh</i>): Felix, you need someone to look after you.</p> <p>F: I have someone. My Mum.</p> <p>A No (<i>with exaggerated sweetness</i>): You need someone <i>else</i> to look after you.</p> <p>F: Someone else? I've got a dog, too.</p> <p>A: You're impossible.</p> <p>F: You're unbelievable.</p> <p>A: Anyway, now you're here—at last—I need your help in writing up what we did yesterday.</p> <p>F: OK. Where do we start?</p> <p>They both peer over the desk and start pointing at papers, laptop screens etc. Felix still scratching and yawning</p> <p>P: Sam, I've thinking. This Jesus story. If he was God's Son why wasn't he born in a palace or a mansion of some kind? What kind of god would be born in a stable? And laid in manger? And what on earth is a manger, anyway?</p> <p>S: And what's so important about a baby being born? What difference could a baby make?</p>	<p>Spotlight on Samantha and Philogian: at the flight deck.</p> <p>Bethlehem scene on the screen.</p> <p>Children move into position SC.</p>
7.50	Soloist and children: 'Away in a manger.'	Spotlight on singers. Aggie moves back to the flight deck.
7.54	P: What about that other lot who pay homage to that large bearded god in a red suit. His images are everywhere. How do these religious practices mesh together? What have you found out?	Spotlight on actors on flight deck. Children leave.

	<p>A (<i>with her hand up like a child in a classroom</i>): I know, I know. He's the one they call Santa Claus.</p> <p>S: Thank-<i>you</i>, Aggie. Actually, Phil, generally, the same people who worship the sun-god worship the large bearded god.</p> <p>P: This bearded one seems pretty generous.</p> <p>S: Yes, he's supposed to give presents to children who have been well-behaved, but he seems to give them out no matter what they've done.</p> <p>P: He must be some sort of Australian idol.</p>	<p>Screen pix of Santa Claus.</p> <p>Singers move into position in wings ready to run on stage.</p>
7.55	<p>Teenage singers group: 'Santa Claus is coming to town.'</p>	<p>Spotlight on singers who are dressed in red and green as elves.</p>
7.58	<p>P: I still don't get it, Sam. How does a large man in a red suit fit in with a baby in a manger?</p> <p>A: I can tell you, Colonel. The idea of giving gifts originally came from presents brought to the infant Jesus. And there's a story about certain astronomers traveling half way across the earth to bring presents to the baby. They thought he was a King.</p> <p>P: Interesting myth, Aggie. Wasn't there also something about an unusual stellar formation to mark the event? A comet or something?</p> <p>A (<i>standing straight like a lecturer</i>): Yes, Colonel. And that's what attracted the attention of the astronomers. You see, sir, when there is a conjunction of two galactic phenomena unprecedented in scientific records and these are located in the nether perimeter of the nebulae so the intensity of illumination is magnified by incremental elevations to an unprecedented level of luminosity, the ocular effect is implicitly and explicitly distinguished by an apparent—</p> <p>S: Yes, Aggie. Quite right. (<i>Aggie pokes her tongue out at Sam as Sam turns away.</i>) Now there's something else as well, the original Santa Claus was actually a follower of Jesus who gave gifts to the poor.</p>	<p>Spotlight on actors.</p> <p>Singers leave.</p> <p>Screen pic of magi.</p>
7.59	<p>Saint: Good evening everyone. My name is Imelda Maxima Ambrosia Saint. 'IMA Saint' for short. Now, now, everyone, no need to cheer. (<i>Pause while waiting for people to do so. If they still don't cheer Saint repeats the</i></p>	<p>This segment is optional. Saint appears with a dramatic entrance.</p>



	<p><i>first line until they do.) because I am proud to tell you that I am also a very Humble Person. (Points to her badge.) In fact humility is one of my greatest virtues.</i></p> <p>Now, I am here today to give gifts to the poor. So I suppose that means I am a generous person, too. Mm, yes, well, actually I am. So I am going to give away these gifts that have all been donated by other church members. So where are all the poor people?</p> <p><i>(Saint doesn't wait for them to identify themselves. S/he moves immediately among the audience and selects six likely candidates, preferably a man, a woman, two young people and two children. S/he leads them by the hand to the stage and proceeds to offer them gifts. She gets them all mixed up and gives a woman's gift to the man and so on. Producers may use their own imaginations here in selecting the gifts. Allow people to try to sort themselves out if they choose to do so. Saint may also try to help by still getting things wrong. Eventually s/he sends them all back to their seats.)</i></p> <p>Saint: Well, now, wasn't that <i>beautiful!</i> They were all so happy with their gifts, weren't they! Would anyone else like a gift? Just hang on a minute while I go and get some more...</p>	<p>Spotlight on him/her. Use masculine or feminine forms of the name as appropriate i.e. either Imeldan Maximus Ambrose or Imelda Maxima Ambrosia. S/he is clothed in a long robe with a wire halo above his/her head, wearing a large badge with large writing: 'Humble Person'. S/he drags a large bag behind her/him. Producers will need to keep a tight rein on the time here and make sure things don't get too disorganized. IMA Saint will need to have strong leadership gifts and an ability to improvise readily.</p> <p>Saint goes off-stage</p>
8.05	<p>A: <i>That was the original Santa Claus? Someone got their wires crossed there! I mean who would ever...</i></p> <p><i>(Sam glares at Aggie who backs off sheepishly.)</i></p> <p>J <i>(looking at computer screen):</i> Sam, you say something in your notes about shepherds and creatures called angels making quite a song and dance about the birth of Jesus.</p> <p>S: I don't know about the dance, but there may well have been a song!</p> <p>P: By the shepherds?</p>	<p>Spotlight on actors.</p> <p>Screen pix of angels and shepherds.</p>

	<p>S: No, the angels.</p> <p>P: What are angels?</p> <p>A: I know. Angels are—</p> <p>S: Some kind of space travelers, I think, Phil.</p> <p>P: Space travelers?... Really?... Okay... Well, what did these ‘space travelers’ sing about, anyway?</p>	<p>Singers move into position.</p>
8.07	<p>Singers: Hark! The herald angels sing.</p>	<p>Spotlight on singers. Lyrics appear on screen preceded by the words, ‘Audience please join in singing.’</p>
8.10	<p>P: I don’t get it. What do they mean by ‘God and sinners reconciled’ and ‘born to give us second birth’?</p> <p>S: I think they believe that somehow or other this Jesus was sent by the true God to be a kind of ambassador. His job was to bring people back to God.</p> <p>P: How? By teaching? By military force? By space travel? By taking over Microsoft?</p> <p>A: I think it was by—</p> <p>S: Not exactly. It seems he had to become one of them and then give his life for them.</p> <p>P: Give his life? How?</p> <p>S: He was executed. Like a criminal.</p> <p>A: They called it crucifixion. Cruel stuff.</p> <p>P: What did he do wrong?</p> <p>S: That’s the interesting thing. Apparently he didn’t do anything wrong. He was innocent. But he believed that by his death he somehow saved them from death. Like paying someone else’s fine.</p> <p>P: Is that possible?</p> <p>S: Well, Jesus was supposed to be both divine and human. As God he had the capacity to take the place of every human being; as a man, he had the right to do so.</p> <p>P: So they live forever because of what <i>he</i> did, not because of anything <i>they</i> do? It’s a kind of a gift?</p> <p>S: That’s right. They call it grace – amazing grace.</p>	<p>Spotlight on actors who now appear on stage talking as they enter from stage right.</p> <p>Singers leave.</p> <p>Sam and Phil sit at a desk or table; Aggie stands slightly back and to the left.</p> <p>Screen pic of crucifixion.</p> <p>Sam stands up and walks meditatively towards the audience.</p> <p>Phil joins Sam, facing the audience.</p> <p>Singers and dancers move into position</p> <p>Actors step back and</p>

		go off-stage.
8.11	Singers and dancers: Amazing grace	Solo (Sam) and/or singers and dancers.
8.14	<p>A: Amazing grace. That's an interesting phrase.</p> <p>F: Why do you say that, Aggie?</p> <p>A: Well, have you ever heard it before?</p> <p>F: No, I can't say I have.</p> <p>A: I mean, even the word 'grace'. It's not a word we use much on Idolotron.</p> <p>F: True.</p> <p>A: Did you know it has a special meaning?</p> <p>F: Like what?</p> <p>A (<i>Adopting a flirtatious approach</i>): It means being really nice to someone even if you don't think they deserve it.</p> <p>F: Why would anyone want to do that?</p> <p>A: Hmph! Some people!... Well, look at it like this, Felix. On Idolotron we just assume that if you do good you'll be rewarded and if you don't you'll be penalized. It's all so predictable (<i>Picks up pen and uses the whiteboard, writing with very large print</i>) <math>a + b = c</math>. But what if you can't help doing wrong? What if you'd do anything to change what you've done if you could? The idea that (<i>writes on whiteboard</i>) <math>a - b</math> might also = <math>c</math> is not part of our thinking. What if there is such a thing as grace? What if someone really could give his life for us? What if somehow his pluses more than make up for all our minuses?</p> <p>F (with puzzled expression and scratching his head, mouthing words like plus and minus, counting on his fingers, as if trying to work out what Aggie is saying): That would be pretty amazing.</p> <p>A: Yes, almost enough to make me want to kneel down with those shepherds and angels myself.</p>	<p>Singers and dancers leave. Actors enter from stage left.</p> <p>Spotlight on actors SC. Again, talking as they enter and moving naturally as they continue to talk.</p> <p>There is a desk on stage and a whiteboard behind Aggie and Felix.</p> <p>Singers move into position.</p>
8.15	Soloist (Aggie) and singers: In Christ Alone (Keith Getty and Stuart Townend).	Spotlight on Aggie or alternative soloist and singers.

8.18	<p>P: So Jesus was executed. End of story, right?</p> <p>S: No. They believe that after he had been buried for three days, he came to life again.</p> <p>P: Came to life? How?</p> <p>S: Just that, Phil. He stopped being dead. And they say he's still alive today.</p> <p>P: Come on, Sam. Pull the other leg.</p> <p>S: Well, take it or leave it. But Christians believe that because he is alive forever, they will live forever, too.</p> <p>P: No one lives forever, Sam.</p> <p>S: They believe they will!</p>	<p>Spotlight on actors who have returned to the flight deck.</p> <p>Singers leave.</p> <p>Screen pic of resurrection.</p>
8.21	<p>Testimony of person who has found meaning and purpose and hope through Christ and assurance of eternal life.</p>	<p>Testimony to be pre-recorded and to appear on screen.</p> <p>Singers move into position.</p>
8.24	<p>P: You know, Sam, if they believe that stuff about Jesus and eternal life really is true, they should be telling everyone.</p> <p>S: If it really is true... Well, then it would be worth shouting from the mountain tops.</p>	<p>Spotlight on actors.</p>
8.25	<p>Singers: 'Go tell it on the mountain'</p>	<p>Spotlight on singers.</p>
8.30	<p>INTERMISSION</p> <p>Thank you for being with us tonight for our presentation of Christmas Space Odyssey #2. We hope you are enjoying the show and invite you to complete the feedback card and hand it to one of the ushers before you leave.</p> <p>Please join us for refreshments in the (name of room) during the Intermission.</p>	<p>Screen notice thanking people for being present and inviting them to complete a response card at the conclusion of the show.</p>
8.55	<p>Music e.g. Go tell it on the mountain</p>	
9.00	<p>P: Sam, I've been thinking. Do these people reckon this story of Jesus is for everyone? Or do they believe it's just for people who live here in this part of the world?</p> <p>S: My research indicates that Jesus came to rescue everyone in the whole earth. That's what this Christmas festival is supposed to be about.</p> <p>P: Rescue? From what?</p>	<p>Phil, Sam, Felix and Aggie are all on stage. Spotlight on actors.</p>

	<p>S: From evil, from crime, from selfishness, from bitterness... Pretty well everything people do wrong.</p> <p>P: Wow, Sam, I reckon that would make a difference to things.</p> <p>S: Just a bit, Phil, just a bit.</p> <p>A (to Felix): Actually it might make a difference to me, too.</p> <p>F: Mm. Now there's an interesting possibility...</p>	Singers move into position. Stay until next song.
9.01	Singers: Joy to the world	Spotlight on singers. Lyrics appear on screen preceded by the words, 'Audience please join in singing.'
9.04	Short one-sentence testimonies of people who have been set free from habits, fears, broken lives etc...	Pre-recorded testimonies appear on the screen
9.10	<p>P: So let me get this straight. This Jesus was actually a god who was born in a stable but who can change the world into a better place.</p> <p>S: Yeah... that's about it.</p> <p>P: How? How can he do it?</p> <p>A: Yeah, Commander, how can he do that?</p> <p>S: Well, not by force, that's for sure.</p> <p>P: So how?</p> <p>S: Basically through his followers. When they turn their backs on their selfishness and devote their whole lives to him, they are changed, somehow. They become different. And so does the world...</p>	Spotlight on actors. Screen pic of stars.
9.11	Soloist and singers: O holy night	Solo (Sam?) plus singers. Spotlight on singers. First stanza by soloist. Then a screen notice invites the audience to join in the singing from the second stanza. Lyrics on screen.
9.14	P: Well, how come most people around here don't seem	Singers leave.

	<p>to believe this story of Jesus?</p> <p>A: Right on, Colonel, I was going to ask that myself.</p> <p>S: That's an interesting question, Phil. I think there must be some strings attached.</p> <p>P: Like what?</p> <p>S: Well, it seems it's not enough just to believe it. You have to be willing to hand over everything in the process.</p> <p>P: To whom?</p> <p>S: Jesus, of course.</p> <p>P: Why on Earth would anyone want to do that?</p> <p>A: Or on Idolotron, for that matter.</p> <p>S: Good question.</p>	<p>Spotlight on actors who are all again on stage. Producer to director appropriate movements.</p>
<p>9.15</p>	<p>Three minute testimony of someone with a story of a life-changing encounter with Christ.</p>	<p>Pre-recorded testimony on screen.</p>
<p>9.18</p>	<p>P: Wow, that was some story.</p> <p>S: Yes, Phil, it's easy to see how if everyone believed they had an encounter with Jesus like that, Earth would be a very different place.</p> <p>P: Hey, Sam, do you suppose this story could actually be true? I mean this Jesus stuff. Could it really have happened? I reckon it's just another primitive myth.</p> <p>S: Yeah, I suppose it is... (<i>Wistfully</i>) But I must say, it does sound appealing. I mean what if it really is possible for someone's life to be transformed like that? What if the past really can be blotted out and all our regrets just... neutralized? What a sense of liberation that would give... Oh, what am I saying? Of course it's not true.</p> <p>P: Well, they reckon it is.</p> <p>S: Yes, I know they do...Phil do you remember when Shiner...when Shiner...left?</p> <p>P: Yes...I do</p> <p>S: I felt so alone, so helpless. I had nowhere to turn. I had so many regrets...There were so many things I wish I had said...or done differently.</p> <p>P: But you can't blame yourself for that, Sam. You did everything any mother could have done.</p> <p>S: Did I? Did I, Phil? I feel so guilty, so...so...bereft</p>	<p>Spotlight on actors who are still on stage.</p>

	<p>P: O come on, Sam. Don't be so hard on yourself.</p> <p>S: But what if I had acted differently? What if I hadn't been so selfish? So caught up with my career?</p> <p>P: Everyone's like that</p> <p>A: Everyone I know of, anyway.</p> <p>S: Yes, but should we be? I wonder sometimes if our values are really upside down. These Jesus people. They seem to have discovered a peace of mind I would like to find. I wonder if it's something to do with being forgiven. Phil, how can I find forgiveness? Who can forgive me?</p> <p>P: Well, I do, Sam.</p> <p>S: But it's nothing to do with you. How you can forgive me? I feel like I need Shiner's forgiveness—but it's too late for that now. And it's funny, I feel as though I need someone else to forgive me, too. Someone bigger than me. Someone who somehow has the right to forgive me. Someone like this Jesus, this Saviour...</p>	
9.20	Testimony about the joy and peace that comes from forgiveness and the reality of knowing Christ.	Pre-recorded testimony on screen.
9.23	<p>P: Well, they seem to have what you're talking about.</p> <p>S: Yes, they do.</p> <p>P: You know, maybe for them it really is more than just a belief. They act as though they have actually met Jesus. As though he really is alive today... So what are we going to say in our final report to the Idolotron Council?</p> <p>S: Well, I guess we'll have to say something about sun-god worship. Are you getting this down, Aggie? Where <i>is</i> Aggie?</p> <p>Agatha appears on opposite side of the stage below. Waves, points to self, gesticulates, mouths words like, 'I'm here! Here! Look at me! Here I am! It's me! Beam me back up! Wait for me!' but obviously can't be heard.</p> <p>Agatha waves furiously and continues to mouth words but cannot be heard or seen. S/he continues to do this during the next ten lines.</p> <p>P: Oh well, we'll just have to press on without her. Mm. Sun-god worship. Yeah, we must include that. And then we'll need to sort out this bearded-guy-in-the-red-suit stuff. That's pretty straight forward.</p> <p>S: Yes, I guess so. Where <i>is</i> that incompetent Flight</p>	Spotlight on actors on flight deck and also on Felix and Aggie, who are inspecting the tree.

	<p>Steward? Agatha!</p> <p>Agatha waves furiously from below and continues to mouth words. Finally she rushes off stage and soon appears puffing on the flight deck followed by Felix.</p> <p>S: But what shall we say about Jesus?</p> <p>P: Well, I guess we begin by documenting his birth in—what was it?—a manger?</p> <p>S: Yes, and we’ll need to describe the unusual circumstances—the angels, the comet-star, all that sort of thing. .</p> <p>P: And it will be important to point out how people even today believe that he was God’s Son, sent to change the world</p> <p>A (<i>eagerly interrupting</i>): And how he lived as a human being and was then condemned to be executed.</p> <p>F (<i>Looking proud of himself</i>): Not for himself or for anything he had done wrong, but for what everyone else had done.</p> <p>A: And then how they say he was buried and rose again from the dead!</p> <p>F: And that one day he’s going to set up an eternal kingdom and rule over all the heavens in all the universe.</p> <p>S: Wow, that’s something to celebrate!</p> <p>P: Maybe. If it’s true...</p>	
9.25	<p>Dance: This can be by a solo dancer or a group or both, depending on the available talent. Can be children or adults. The dance needs to celebrate the new life and hope there is in Christ, and perhaps his coming again as King of Kings.</p>	<p>Dancers enter from stage right. Spotlight on dancer. At conclusion of dance, Aggie appears on stage by the Christmas tree.</p>
9.28	<p>S: You know, Phil, they’re going to find all that about Jesus dying and rising again and setting up an eternal kingdom hard to believe, especially when we tell them it’s supposed to include us, too.</p> <p>P: Eh? Us? What? C’mon Sam, it’s nothing to do with us. But it sure is some story. A pity, actually, that it’s not true.</p> <p>S: Phil, what if it IS true? What if Jesus really is the One</p>	<p>Sam and Phil are now on stage at SC.</p> <p>Stage movements as appropriate for the dialogue.</p>



who rescues us from our mistakes, and faults and sense of guilt? What if he can save us from ourselves? What if we should put our faith in him?

P: We? Us? You and me? Moon-brained folks like Aggie maybe. But not people like us! Come on, Sam, be real.

S: That's exactly what I am trying to do, Phil. I'm trying to be real.

P: Seriously?

S: Yes, Phil, seriously.

P: Next thing, you'll be trying to make me a believer, too.

S: Maybe I will, Phil, maybe I will... But I have to work it out for myself, first. You know, I have a strange feeling—it's—it's like – like I'm coming home from a long journey.

P: You will be when we blast off.

S: No, not that. It's a heart-thing. It's like I've been feeling homesick for years but now I don't need to feel homesick any more. It's like there's someone waiting for me... waiting for me with open arms.

P: Who? You're not talking about this Jesus are you?

S: I'm not sure, maybe I am. It's like I can hear a voice somewhere inviting me to stop my frantic rushing and dashing everywhere...to stop searching in all the wrong places and just to...to well, come home. Maybe it is Jesus. Maybe it is his voice I can hear.

P: Voice? What sort of voice?

S: I don't really know. It's soft. It's tender. It's powerful and full of love. It's inviting. And in a nice sort of way, it's insistent. It's like—like the voice of my older brother when I was a little girl. I'd be playing outside in the dirt, all grubby and messy, and he would call me to come inside and if I took too long, he'd come out and pick me up and carry me in, dirt and all. And I'd put my arms around his neck and cling to him and snuggle in against his shoulder. And we'd go inside where my father and mother were waiting for us. It was warm and friendly and there'd be a hot bath and tasty food. It was home.

That's how I feel now. I feel so...grubby...so ashamed of who I am and what I've done. But his voice is calling me to come inside and be warm and clean again. And, Phil, I just want to do it. I just want to obey that voice. I just

During this dialogue, a short silent video could be shown in the background of a little girl running to her big brother who carries her inside while she snuggles into him. This will depend on the resources and skills available in the group producing the show.

	want to go home.	
9.32	Solo: Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling.	Spotlight on soloist. During the second stanza, Sam appears on stage. She walks slowly to stage-centre where she kneels with head bowed, facing the audience. During the third stanza, the other two players and the dancers kneel either side of Sam facing the audience with heads bowed. During the fourth stanza, Santa Claus and the elves also kneel either side of the actors.  Singers on stage during last stanza of song.
9.35	Singers:  O come let us adore him O come let us adore him O come let us adore him Christ the Lord.  For he alone is worthy For he alone is worthy For he alone is worthy Christ the Lord.  I'll worship him forever I'll worship him forever I'll worship him forever Christ the Lord.	Song begins softly. Volume gradually increases.  Pastor to SC.  Continue to sing if appropriate; invite audience to stand, lift hands...
9.45	Senior pastor: Closing comments.	Spotlight on Senior pastor as he leads people in a prayer of commitment and then invites people

		to complete the response card and to attend the Christmas Day service. Actors leave while he speaks.
9.50	<p>Benediction</p> <p>May The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Cor. 13:14, ESV)</p>	Senior Pastor.
9.51	<p>Thanks to Odyssey Team—including all volunteers.</p> <p>And now: We wish you a MERRY CHRISTMAS!</p>	Senior Pastor draws attention to names in program. Audience invited to applaud them. Invites audience to complete the response card and hand it to an usher as they leave or post it in later.
9.53	Curtain call. Singers – ‘We wish you a merry Christmas.’	<p>Stage lighting on.</p> <p>While the music continues, the performers step forward in groups joining hands, to bow and then step back in order as follows—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Children</li> <li>○ Youth</li> <li>○ Saint</li> <li>○ Dancers</li> <li>○ Singers</li> <li>○ Soloists</li> <li>○ Actors (twice)</li> <li>○ All</li> </ul> <p>All join hands in</p>

		single line across the stage; bow twice; lift open hands towards tech team and then clap; lift hands heavenwards and clap with hands above heads; step down and shake hands with audience; house lights on.
10.00	Close	

## Odyssey songs copyright details

Most of the songs in the Odyssey trilogy are in the Public Domain and are free from copyright. Traditional melodies are also exempt from copyright restrictions. Unless a copyright has been renewed, it usually lapses after fifty years. If your church/fellowship has a CCLI licence, copyrights of most Christian songs should be covered. The original songs included in the trilogy may be used freely. Permission is commonly given freely for not-for-profit events. As copyright laws vary from country to country, where the © symbol appears below, it is probably wise to check. The following list gives relevant details of individual songs as at 2017, as far as could be ascertained at that time. If permission cannot be obtained for any particular song, feel free to choose an alternative.

ODYSSEY #1			
1. People need the Lord	1983 Greg Nelson and Phillip McHugh, © Power Oaks Music Co Shepherds Field Music.		Solo and singers
2. Mary's boy child	Jester Hairston © Group Publishing Inc.		Singers plus all
3. Away in a manger	Writer not known. Public Domain.		Children
4. Santa Claus is coming to town	John Coutts and Haven Gillepsie (1934). © EMI, 2016. (Note that there has been some dispute about the copyright.)		YP
5. Hark! The herald angels sing	Charles Wesley 1739. Music adapted from Felix Mendelssohn. Public Domain.		Singers plus all
6. Amazing Grace	John Newton 1773. Public Domain.		Sam plus singers and dancers
7. In Christ Alone	Keith Getty, Stuart Townend 2001. © Kingsway Thankyou Music.		Aggie or other soloist plus singers
8. Go tell it on the mountain	Public Domain		Singers
9. Joy to the world	Isaac Watts 1719. Public Domain.		Singers plus all

10. O holy night	Placide Clappeau 1847. Translated by John Dwight. Public Domain.		Sam or other soloist plus Singers
11. TBA	Dance item.		
12. Softly and tenderly	Will Thompson 1880. Public Domain.		Solo
13. O come let us adore him	Public Domain.		Singers plus all
<b>ODYSSEY #2</b>			
1. Silent night	Joseph Moir 1816. Public Domain.		Singers plus all
2. While shepherds watched their flocks	Nahum Tate 1700. Public Domain.		Singers plus all
3. I'm dreaming of a brown Christmas	Lyrics of I'm dreaming of a white Christmas © Irving Berlin 1941. Permission to use the lyrics in this production (Brown Christmas) is automatic. Copyright on the melody may need to be verified.		Solo (Aggie)
4. Jingle Bells	James Pierpont 1857. Public Domain.		Children plus all
5. When I see Jesus	© Barry Chant 1981. Permission is automatic.		Solo (Sam)
6. TBA	Dance item		
7. I cannot tell	W. Y. Fullerton 1920. © Carey Kingsgate Press Ltd. The melody Londonderry Air is in the Public Domain.		Solo (Sam?) plus singers
8. How deep the Father's love for us	Stuart Townend 1995. © Thankyou Music administered by Capitol/CMGP Publishing.		Singers plus all
9. How great thou art	Carl Boberg 1885. Tr by Stuart Hine. © Stuart Hine Trust 1953. Traditional melody (Public Domain).		Soloist (Felix?) plus singers plus all

10. O little town of Bethlehem	Phillips Brooks 1868. Public Domain.		Singers
11. Dance			TBA
12. What child is this?	William Dix 1865. Traditional melody (Greensleeves). Public Domain.		Singers
13. We were the reason	David Meece 1980. © New Heritage Foundation.		Solo
14. When I survey	Isaac Watts 1707. Public Domain.		Solo (Phil) plus singers
15. O come let us adore him	Public Domain.		All
<b>ODYSSEY #3</b>			
1. God rest you merry, gentlemen	Traditional carol. Public Domain.		Singers
2. Because he lives	Gloria Gaither 1971. © William Gaither 1971.		Singers plus all.
3. Do you hear what I hear?	Noel Regney, Gloria Shane 1962. © Jewel Music Publishing Co.		Song and dance
4. My heart cries out	Fred Grice, 1982. Permission is automatic.		Solo (Phil)
5. It is no secret	Stuart Hamblen c.1950. © Hamblen Music Company Inc.		Country Singers
6. Soon and very soon	Andrae Crouch 1976. © 1976 Bud John Songs Inc, Crouch Music/ASCAP.		Children song and dance
7. Come on ring those bells	Andrew Culverwell 1976. © Manna Music Inc, 1976, 2004.		YP
8. The Master has come OR The Servant King	Sarah Doudney (1871) to the tune The Ash Grove (Welsh Melody); or, The Servant King (Graham Kendrick, © 1983, Thankyou Music.)		Singers
9. Red River Valley	Traditional.		Josh and Shiner
10. Down from his glory	<i>Lyrics:</i> William E. Booth-Clibborn, 1921.		Duet (Phil and Sam)

	<i>Music:</i> Arranged from O Sole Mio by Eduardo di Capua, 1898. The original was copyrighted in 1901. Some arrangements or performances have been copyrighted since but the original melody seems to be in the Public Domain. There is no known copyright on the lyrics.		
11. Joy to the world	Isaac Watts 1719. Public Domain.		Singers plus all
12. Jesus, name above all names/There's just something about that name	Naida Hearn 1978. © Scripture in Song administered by Maranatha Music.  Gloria Gaither 1970. © by William Gaither 1970.		Singers plus all
13. O come let us adore him	Public Domain.		Singers plus all