



On your marks

TV schedules and Christmas have been inextricably linked over the years. Annual specials or well-loved repeats are as much a part of many people's Christmas traditions as are turkey and Christmas pudding - in fact in some homes meals might even be rescheduled just to fit in with the programmes themselves! The following piece picks up on this annual TV bonanza by linking some well-loved TV programmes to the big story of the Bible and the real meaning of Christmas for Christians.

Get set

This piece uses 54 TV programme titles to help tell the story of the Bible from cover to cover, putting Christmas into its bigger context. It could be used in a variety of ways:

- As a performance piece in church or at a special Christmas concert. It is meant to make people smile as well as think!
- As material for a talk within a service for all ages in which you want to invite people to respond to the good news of the gospel this Christmas
- As an activity for a children's or an all-age group, matching up the programmes to the different events in the Bible story and inviting them maybe to add in some more of their own! For this you will need to print out the different programme titles from the piece below and also add Bible references or Bible page links to the various episodes or truths.

You may not want to use all the programmes and story links in order to make the presentation more manageable in some contexts. If you have time, sound and visual clues to the programmes could add an extra dimension to this piece.

N.B. Just a few programmes cited are not current but should nevertheless be well-known.

Go!

'Have I got *good* news for you'?

The TV Guide to the Bible and the Christmas story

In the beginning God had a great plan to make the whole universe.

Mastermind

He timed himself and over a period of six days...

Countdown



He made the sky above

Stars in their Eyes

and the earth below.

Life on Earth

The world was beautiful filled with green and growing things.

Gardeners' World

The world was alive with all sorts of creatures

Wildlife on One

and God placed you and me in it to live in a paradise called Eden.

Location, Location, Location

God gave people the freedom to choose whether to follow his ways or not

Deal or no Deal

They - we - chose to go our own way and we fell out of God's presence and out of the garden

Casualty

And death came into the world.

One Foot in the Grave

But life continued; mothers and fathers had children and they had children

My Family

While God looked sadly on because evil grew more and more strong

Crimewatch

People even tried to outdo God, but their plans at Babel came crashing down

Fawlty Towers

Once God decided to flood it all away, though he did rescue Noah and his family and the animals

Pet Rescue



But that didn't solve the problem of sin in people's hearts.

So God chose a few special people to learn all about him.

He called Abraham for example to pack his bags and leave for a Promised Land and settle near the Oaks of Mamre

Hol(I)y-Oaks

God spoke with many others down the ages,

but so often people refused to listen and they ended up in a mess.

Abraham's descendants became slaves in Egypt

Trapped

And God used Moses to challenge the Egyptian King. He sent plagues and rescued them, bringing them safe through the waters to freedom

Escape to the Country

And on the shores of the Red Sea, Miriam led the celebrations

Strictly Come Dancing

God looked after them in the desert providing plenty to eat each morning

Breakfast

God gave them his laws from Mount Sinai.

Yet they spent ages wandering in the desert before they arrived in the Promised Land

Lost

And so it continued.

God spoke to many individuals - judges and kings - who tried to bring the people back to God

Heroes

But again and again they turned away from God and let him down

The Weakest Link

So God decided to speak to people in a new way.



God planned to become a human being and live as part of his own creation;
to experience life on earth with us.

Years passed as people waited for what the prophets promised to come true

Timewatch

Finally God chose Mary, to be the perfect mother

Supernanny

And when baby God arrived at Christmas there was great celebration at the stable
and heaven and earth shared a common

Heartbeat

Shepherds visited and wise men from afar brought amazing gifts.

Family Fortunes

But later when Herod got to hear of the birth, it became

CSI Bethlehem

The baby grew up

Jesus became a man and was baptised by his cousin John at the river

Brookside *Do you remember that?*

He chose 12 disciples

The Apprentice

He did amazing things and taught people how to love each other

Neighbours

And how they should care for the last and the least....and not

Mock the Weak

He told stories about merchants and shepherds

Shaun the Sheep



He fed over 5000 with 5 loaves and two small fish

Masterchef

and he healed the sick...though no one quite knew who he really was

Doctor Who?

However, some people didn't want to admit they were wrong about God

Eggheads

They spied on him and tried to trap him

Spooks

When Jesus went to Jerusalem for the last time, people lined the roads and cheered

Coronation Street

But it wasn't long before they were ganging up on him

Who do you think you are?

And they brought false charges against him

You've been framed

and they put him to death on a cross

The X Factor

But God raised him from death and the stone was rolled away

Good Newsround

He appeared to people in a new body

Top Gear

He was really alive and welcomed everyone to become friends with God

Would like to meet

His followers preached this good news locally and all around the world

Home and Away



And said we should always remember him, as we drink

Er..Some of the Last Wine!

They told everyone that the bad in our lives can be crossed out, because

The Bill

had been paid.

All we had to do was to come to God and say goodbye to our sin.

Room 101

God would come into us as the Holy Spirit and bring a real change.

60 Minute make-over

And give a new direction for our lives.

Going for Gold

Of course this had to be our own choice.

Points of View

Yet God longs that we get ready for heaven right now and so

Be in it to win it

Because one day all evil will be banished

The Dragon's Den

And there will be a new heaven and a new earth

The Green Green Grass

And that's how *his story* goes - with Christmas in the middle of it all;

and with God waiting for you and me to come back to him.

God wants us to know his love and be close to him every day;

to join his growing world-big family.

And so, offering us all eternal life,



GOD asks us:

Who wants to be a *true* millionaire?