

# Rise Up Shepherd and Follow

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Rise Up Shepherd and Follow". It is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The score consists of six staves of music. Above the first staff are the chords D, G, A7, D, C, and A7. Above the second staff are D, G, and D. Above the third staff, the word "Refrain" is written in blue, followed by D, G, D, C, and A7. Above the fourth staff are D, G, D, G, and D. Above the fifth staff are C, A7, G, and D. Above the sixth staff are G and D. The music features a simple melody with eighth and quarter notes, and rests.

1. There's a star in the east on Christmas morn.  
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.  
It will lead to the place where the Christ was born.  
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

### Refrain

- Follow, follow;  
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.  
Follow the star of Bethlehem.  
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.
2. If you take good heed to the angel's words,  
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.  
You'll forget your flocks, you'll forget your herds.  
Rise up, shepherd, and follow.

### Refrain

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The first known publication of "Rise Up, Shepherd and Follow" was text only in the body of a short story titled "Christmas-Gifts" by Ruth McEnery Stuart, found in **Lippincott's Monthly Magazine** (Jan-June 1891). In the story, slaves were participating in a Christmas celebration hosted by their Louisiana plantation owner family. During an entertaining dance, two of the slaves began to sing the spiritual, "Rise Up, Shepherd and Follow".

Its first appearance in musical form was in a songbook titled **Religious Folksongs of the Negro as Sung on the Plantations** (#173), subtitled "Christmas Plantation Song". This, as with other similar books, was a collection of Negro spirituals heard sung, then transcribed as a manuscript for publication.

Like many other spirituals, this one has a call-and-response form.

The original refrain was 16 bars long instead of the 8 bars usual now.

Leave your sheep and leave your lamb,

Rise up, shepherd, and follow,

Leave your ewes and leave your rams,

Rise up, shepherd, and follow!

Follow, follow, rise up, shepherd, and follow,

Follow the star of Bethlehem, rise up, shepherd, and follow.

The version shown here follows the original.

There seems to be some confusion of the stories of the revelation to the shepherds and that of the arrival of the magi in the Gospels.

It has been published in 22 hymnals of various denominations and is #645 in ELCA's **With One Voice**.