

Family Christmas Eve Service

Gather together- arrange nativity if you have a stable. Pass out nativity pieces. For smaller nativities, you may not have all the pieces, which is okay. Just add what you have. Our family has several different sets and we like to pull pieces from each set to get an overall picture.

Opening Prayer

Light Candles- We are a family with a lot of small children so we chose battery-powered flickering candles for this service. They can be lit for the entire service.

Have different family members read each section or have a reader. Feel free to replace the songs with ones you prefer. You may also want to sing all the verses but to keep it short, we just sing the most well-known verses.

READ Isaiah 7:14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

SING: O Come, O Com Emmanuel

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

READ Luke 1: 26b-38

God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, [Place Angel in the Nativity] a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. [Place Mary in the Nativity]

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

READ Matthew 1:18-25

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, [Place Joseph in the Nativity] but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). When Joseph woke up, he did what

the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

READ: Luke 2:1-7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. [Place Jesus in the Nativity] She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, [add other barn animals to Nativity] because there was no guest room available for them.

SING: Away in a Manger

*Away in a manger,
no crib for His bed,
The little Lord Jesus
laid down His sweet head; The
stars in the heavens looked down
where He lay, The little Lord Jesus
asleep on the hay.*

*The cattle are lowing, the
poor Baby wakes, But little
Lord Jesus, no crying He
makes. I love Thee, Lord
Jesus; look down from the
sky And stay by my cradle till
morning is nigh.*

READ: Isaiah 9:6-7

For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the Lord Almighty
will accomplish this.

SING: What Child Is This? (Optional)

*What Child is this, who laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing.
Haste, haste to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.*

READ: Micah 5:2

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me

one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.”

SING: O Little Town of Bethlehem

*O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie.
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;*

*Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.*

*For Christ is born of Mary, and gathered all above
While mortals sleep the angels keep their watch of wondering love
Oh morning stars together, proclaim thy holy birth.
And praises sing to God the king, and peace to men on earth.*

*Oh little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by*

*Yet in thy dark streets shineth, the everlasting light
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

READ: Luke 2: 8-14

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, [Place Shepherd(s) in Nativity] keeping watch over their flocks at night. [Place sheep in Nativity] An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a

manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host [Place additional Angels in the Nativity] appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

SING: Hark the Herald Angels Sing

*Hark! the herald angels sing "Glory to the newborn King
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!"
Joyful, all ye nations rise; Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic host proclaim "Christ is born in Bethlehem!" Hark! the herald
angels sing "Glory to the newborn King!"*

SING: The First Noel

*The first Noel the angels did say Was to certain
poor shepherds in fields as they lay,
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Noel Noel Noel Noel!
Born is the King of Israel!*

READ: Luke 2: 15-20

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

READ: Matthew 2:1-12

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem [Place Wise Men in the Nativity] and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star [Add Star to Nativity] had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

SING: We Three Kings

*We three kings of orient are, bearing gifts
we traverse afar Field and fountain,
moor and mountain,
following yonder star.*

*O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal
beauty bright. Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

READ: Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king comes to you,
righteous and victorious,
lowly and riding on a donkey, [Add the Donkey to the Nativity]
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

READ: John 3:16

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

SING: Joy to the World

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King
Let every heart
Prepare Him room
And Heaven and Nature sing
And Heaven and Nature sing
And Heaven, and Heaven and Nature sing*

SING: O Holy Night (OR Silent Night)

O holy night,
the stars are brightly shining; It is the night of our dear Savior's birth!
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.
Fall on your knees,

O hear the angel voices! O night
divine,
O night when Christ was born!
O night divine, O night, O night divine!

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother
And in His name all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
Let all within us praise His holy name!
Christ is the Lord,
Oh praise His name forever,
His pow'r and glory evermore proclaim His pow'r and glory evermore
proclaim.

(Optional Substitution) SING: Silent Night *This is where traditional candles are lit*

*Silent night, holy night!
All is calm, All is bright
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child Holy Infant so
Tender and mild, Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.*

*Silent night, holy night!
Shepherds quake at the sight! Glories stream
from heaven afar; Heavenly hosts sing
Al-le-lu-ia! Christ the Saviour is born!
Christ the Saviour is born!*

*Silent night, holy night!
Wondrous star, lend thy light! With the
angels let us sing
Alleluia to our King!
Christ the Saviour is here,
Jesus the Saviour is here!*

*Silent night, Holy night!
Son of God, love's pure light Radiant beams from
Thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus Lord at thy birth;
Jesus Lord at thy birth.*

Close with reflections of thankfulness for the year, thoughts about the Christmas story, high/low for the year (name the worst thing and the best thing from the year and then pray them back to the Lord) or other conclusive things.

Closing prayer.