

The Nativity of our Lord

A Celebrate! Worship for Every Festival⁺

Service of Holy Communion* with Lessons and Carols

Preparation notes:

This service is dependent upon a Nativity set with individual pieces that can be carried by children during the service. It is also suggested that a significant number of angels be purchased so that it is guaranteed that there will be enough characters for every child to have an opportunity to add to the Nativity. Also, a large number of angels does indeed represent the host of heaven! Thrift stores are an excellent place to purchase angels. It is also suggested that the angels be of a variety of sizes, styles, shapes, and colors to reflect the marvelous diversity of all that is.

Jingle bells, tied with ribbons, need to be purchased in advance and distributed to all worshipers before the service begins.

Planning notes:

Readers: *The service is enhanced by multiple readers of various ages. Some of the readings provided are included from child-friendly translations, encouraging leadership of all ages. It is preferable to have all readers chosen in advance so that the readings can be practiced prior to worship. However, readers may also be chosen for the various readings at the start of the service, if this is part of local tradition and appropriate to a given context.*

Music: *The songs provided are suggestions that speak to or respond to the readings. The hymn numbers are from Evangelical Lutheran Worship. Congregations are encouraged to choose sacred music that reflects the piety of their particular worshiping community. Should musical ensembles or soloists be available, congregations are encouraged to include either intergenerational ensembles or soloists and ensembles that represent a variety of ages.*

Nativity: *For ease of movement during the service, it is suggested that the characters of the Nativity simply be placed together, off to the side, near the front of the sanctuary so that they are easily accessible to the children during the service.*

Following the service, *the children are encouraged to each take an angel home, and all worshipers are invited to take their bells home as a remembrance of this service.*

His authority shall grow continually,
and there shall be endless peace
for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onwards and for evermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel v. 2 ELW 257

The first Advent candle is lit

Reading: Isaiah 11:1-3

A small tree will begin to grow from the stump of Jesse.
That branch will grow from Jesse's roots.
The Lord's Spirit will always be with that new king
to give him wisdom, understanding, guidance, and power.
The Spirit will help him know and respect the Lord.
He will find joy in obeying the Lord.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel v. 4 ELW 257

The Second Advent candle is lit

Reading: Micah 5:2-5

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
are the smallest town in Judah.
Your family is almost too small to count,
but the "Ruler of Israel" will come from you to rule for me.
His beginnings are from ancient times,
from long, long ago.
The Lord will let his people be defeated
until the woman gives birth to her child, the promised king.
Then the rest of his brothers will come back
to join the people of Israel.
He will begin to rule Israel in the power of the Lord.
Like a shepherd, he will lead his people in the wonderful name of the Lord his God.
And they will live in safety
because then his greatness will be known all over the world.
He will bring a time of peace.

O Come, O Come Emmanuel v. 5 ELW 257

The Third Advent candle is lit

Mary's Story

Luke 1:26-38

Gabriel was an angel.
He obeyed God.
Sometimes he took special news
From God to people on earth.
One day God sent Gabriel to a young lady.
Her name was Mary.
Gabriel went to Mary.
He said, "Greetings! God is with you!"
Mary was afraid.
She wondered what he meant.
But Gabriel said, "Do not be afraid.
God loves you.
God is going to give you a baby.
You will name him Jesus.
He will be God's Son!?"
Mary was surprised.
"How can this be true?" she asked.
"Nothing is impossible with God," said Gabriel.
"I believe you," said Mary.
"I will do whatever God wants."
Then Gabriel left Mary.

Of the Father's Love Begotten vs. 1,2
Mary is placed in the Nativity

ELW 295

Joseph's story

Matthew 1:18-21

When the angel was gone, Mary wondered how she would ever find the nerve to tell Joseph.
She and Joseph were to be married very soon.
She knew Joseph loved her, but she was sure no person alive
would ever believe THIS story!
Happily, Mary was very wrong.
Gabriel soon arrived at the place where Joseph lived.
Joseph was asleep, but the angel did not need to have anyone let him in the door.
He came to Joseph in a dream
And said, "Don't be afraid.
The child that Mary soon will have
Is one that God has made.
And when her baby son is born,
You'll give this little boy
The name of Jesus. He will save
The world and bring great joy."