



CALIFORNIA LUTHERAN HOMES
CENTER FOR SPIRITUALITY
AND AGING

Sensing the Sacred

Advent and Christmas



Worship Order

Advent and Christmas

WE APPROACH GOD

Informal greeting and reviewing names while people gather. If you are new to the group give each person a nametag so that you can address them by name during the service.

When everyone has gathered say:

Leader: *We have gathered here to worship God. This is a special place. God is here. We have all the time we need to be with God, to talk to God, and to listen to God.*

We will begin with a blessing. I will say: “The Lord be with you,” and you will respond “And also with you.” Let’s greet each other.

Leader: **The Lord be with you**

Residents: **And also with you.**

[Pass out hymn sheet and invite participants to sing with you.]

Suggestion:

“Oh Come, All Ye Faithful”

End by repeating the chorus, “O come let us adore him. . . “

[Pick up hymn sheet.]

TELLING GOD’S WORD

When we sing “O come let us adore him” we are getting ready to listen to the story of Jesus’ birth.

Place the purple underlay on the table. Put the long white road on the purple underlay. Put the model of Bethlehem at the end of the road to your left. Then say:



Presenter is here

This is the season of Advent, the time when we get ready to celebrate Christmas, the time when we are all on the way to Bethlehem.

Point toward Bethlehem.

But who will show us the way?

Turn to the nativity set on the tray behind (or beside) you and take Mary and say:

Here is Mary. . . .

Place Mary on the right-hand end of the road. Then present and place Joseph.

. . . . and Joseph

They have a secret. An angel came to them and said, “Do not be afraid. Be joyful. You will have God’s special Son. You will name him Jesus.”



Present and place the donkey.

Here is the donkey that Mary rode when she and Joseph went to Bethlehem to be counted by the Roman soldiers. Mary was about to have a baby, so it was hard for her to walk. Sometimes she rode on the donkey. It is also hard to ride on a donkey when you are about to have a baby. Sometimes she got down and walked.

Mary and Joseph and the donkey can show us the way to Bethlehem.

After some time to meditate on the Holy Family, move them ahead on the road.



Then turn to the Nativity set and get the shepherd(s) and the sheep one at a time and place them on the road at the right. Then say:

Here are the shepherds. . . and their sheep. They are on the way to Bethlehem. They can show us the way.

They have good news too. An angel came to them and said, “Do not be afraid. Be joyful. Today God’s special Son, is born in Bethlehem. You will find him lying in a manger.”

When they saw the light in the darkness, they were afraid. Then they heard singing. That scared them, until they heard the words. The angels sang that they came to bring peace on earth and good will to all people.

The shepherds are on the way to Bethlehem to see the special child who was born. They can show us the way.

After some time to meditate on the shepherds move Mary and Joseph closer to Bethlehem. Move the shepherds to the point previously occupied by Mary and Joseph.

Turn to the Nativity set and get the Magi and the camel, placing them on the road one at a time.



Here are the three kings and their camel. These kings were so wise that people thought they were magic. They were called magi. Of all the things they knew, they knew the most about the stars.

One day they saw the wild star. This star was new and it moved; it was not on their maps of the sky. So when it moved they were curious and followed it.

The Magi are following the star to Bethlehem, bringing gifts for the newborn king: gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. They are on the way to Bethlehem. They can show us the way.

End story here and go to wondering questions during Advent.

Continue story at Christmas

After meditating on the Magi, move the figures one at a time until they form a circle around the door of Bethlehem.



When Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem there was no room for them. So they found a stable.

Present the cow from the stable

This is the cow that was in the stable when the baby was born. He was surprised to find a baby in the manger, where he usually found his breakfast.

Place the cow in the circle

Now it is Christmas, the time we celebrate the mystery of God becoming a person. We are all at Bethlehem to meet the Christ child, the special son of God.



Turn to shelf and pick up the baby in the manger and present it.

Here is the newborn child, lying in a manger bed. He is reaching out to give each one of you a hug.



From behind the model of Bethlehem move the Christ child through the gate of Bethlehem and place the figure in front of the gate.

The child's name is Jesus and he came to show God's love for the whole world. . . and for us.

Sing together:

O come let us adore him. . . O Come let us adore him. . .

O Come let us adore him. . . Christ the Lord.

RESPONDING TIME

Wondering Together

I wonder how Mary felt when the angel spoke to her?

I wonder how Mary and Joseph felt on their way to Bethlehem?

I wonder how the shepherds felt when an angel spoke to them.

I wonder what will happen when they find Jesus, God's special child?

I wonder how the Magi felt when they saw the special star?

I wonder why the Magi brought gifts?

Christmas Wondering Questions:

I wonder how it feels to be in Bethlehem?

I wonder how it felt to see the baby Jesus in the manger in the stable.

Leader: Christ is with us as we hear the word of God. Our story today is in the Bible. Read the scripture.

Week 1: Luke 1: 26-33, 46-47

Week 2: Luke 2: 8-20

Week 3: Matthew 2:1-2, 8-11.

Week 4: (repeat one of the above)

Christmas: Luke 2:1-7

WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD

Now it is time to give God thanks. We can thank God for something. What would you like to thank God for?

Prayer by leader incorporating responses. Prayer ends by thanking God for the gift of his son, Jesus, and then with the Lord's Prayer in unison.

GO IN GOD'S NAME

[Pass out hymn sheet and invite participants to sing with you.]

Suggestions:

“Silent Night”

“Oh Little Town of Bethlehem”

[Pick up hymn sheet.]

Pronounce the Benediction:

Receive the Benediction: “The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. (In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.) AMEN.”