

Waiting for Jesus



A Children's Christmas Service

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WORSHIP KIT

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Notes for Leaders

Speaking Parts

There are six sections with a total of 84 lines that can be assigned to four or more children. One or two children should be assigned as “Grandparent,” one or two children assigned as “Parent.” At least two additional children can play the parts of siblings. If there is a large number of children available for speaking parts, different children can be assigned to each of the six sections. There are also 19 Scripture readings (indicated by an **R** in the script), which can be read by one or more children or an adult. Longer readings can also be broken up to accommodate the number of parts needed. Children may also be assigned as “Leaders” (indicated by an **L**) of liturgy and prayers, or these leader lines can be read by the pastor. Characters can be dressed in modern-day clothes.

Children's Songs

Songs by children are indicated in the script and include "Angels from the Realms of Glory," "O Come, All Ye Faithful" and "God Loves Me Dearly" (for youngest children). Additionally, children can be assigned verses for congregational hymns, if desired. All children with speaking and non-speaking parts should gather to sing in a designated area.

Centerpiece Display

An Advent calendar assembled on a 48" x 36" presentation board will serve as the centerpiece for this service (images for assembly are included, along with a sample). A living room scene serves as the set. This should include a Christmas tree with a least one gift under it, chairs and/or sofa and a table for the Advent calendar to be displayed.

Instructions for creating and using the Advent calendar are as follows:

- Cut out numbered squares and glue or tape them (in numerical order) onto the center portion of the display board.
- Decorate display board as desired with markers, stickers, crayons, etc.
- Cut out the six picture images (these may be glued or taped to stronger paper such as poster board for more stability).
- Wrap each image in a small, flat shirt box (or other small box) using Christmas wrapping paper (wrap the box and lid separately for easier opening) and label each box with a number as follows:
 - o Seeds-Box 1
 - o Ornament-Box 2
 - o Hourglass-Box 3
 - o Thank-you Card-Box 4
 - o Bible-Box 5
 - o Alarm Clock-Box 6

- Boxes should be kept on the table behind the Advent calendar and presented at designated times as noted in the script.
- Where designated in the script, boxes are opened and the image can be taped or glued (glue sticks are easiest) onto the calendar on the number designated in the script.
- During songs, certain numbered squares (specified in the script) that will not have images should be marked with an X by a child using a bold red marker.
- During “The Lord Is Come!” section, a Bible is needed as a prop.
- If desired and equipment is available, images can also be electronically displayed on a screen for better viewing by those in attendance.

Nativity Tableau

The script calls for costumed nativity characters including Mary, Joseph, angels and shepherds. Instructions are included in the script as to when these characters should enter and exit. The nativity tableau is optional, but if included, a manger with a doll representing baby Jesus should be used. It can be set up on either side of the living room set as space allows. An alternative to a live tableau would be to project images of Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels and baby Jesus on a screen as indicated in the script.

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Order of Service

Pre-Service Music

As We Gather

As you wait for the service to begin, prepare for worship as a child excitedly waits for Christmas. Wait in joyful expectation of the Good News the children will share of the long-awaited promise of God, fulfilled in the birth of Jesus.

Processional HymnCome, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,
Dear desire of ev'ry nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver; born a child and yet a king!
Born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

Invocation and Call to Worship

(with selections from Psalms, Isaiah and John)

- ℓ In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
- ℓ Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!
- ☞ **I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his Word I hope.**
- ℓ The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.
- ☞ **This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.**
- ℓ Jesus, our Savior, has come; he dwells with us now; and he will return in glory.
- ☞ **Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!**

Prayer of the Day

A Meditation

Waiting for Jesus With Faith

Song by Congregation..... Once in Royal David's City

Once in royal David's city stood a lowly cattle shed
Where a mother laid her baby in a manger for a bed.
Mary was that mother mild, Jesus Christ her little child.

He came down to earth from heaven, who is God and Lord of all,
And his shelter was a stable, and his cradle was a stall;
With the poor, and mean, and lowly, lived on earth our Savior holy.

And our eyes at last shall see him, through his own redeeming love;
For that child so dear and gentle is our Lord in heav'n above;
And he leads his children on to the place where he is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable, with the oxen standing by,
We shall see him, but in heaven, set at God's right hand on high;
When like stars his children crowned all in white shall wait around.

Waiting for Jesus with Rejoicing

Song by Congregation..... Now Sing We Now Rejoice

Now sing we now rejoice, now raise to heav'n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth the sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!

Come from on high to me; I cannot rise to thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;
Through thy grace and merit, blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto thee! Draw me unto thee!

Now through his Son doth shine the Father's grace divine.
Death was reigning o'er us through sin and vanity
Till he opened for us a bright eternity.
May we praise him there! May we praise him there!

Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'nly ground?
Where the angels singing with all his saints unite,
Sweetest praises bringing in heav'nly joy and light.
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

Waiting for Jesus with Hope

Song by Children.....Angels from the Realms of Glory

Waiting for Jesus with Gratitude

Song by Young ChildrenGod Loves Me Dearly

The Lord Is Come!

Song by Children..... O Come, All Ye Faithful

Let Earth Receive Her King!

Offering

Closing Prayer

Benediction

Recessional Hymn..... Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king!
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room
And heav'n and nature sing; and heav'n and nature sing;
And heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground.
He comes to make his blessings flow
Far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
Far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world, with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love; and wonders of his love;
And wonders, wonders of his love.

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Complete Script

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Prayer of the Day

- ℓ Heavenly Father, as we wait for Christmas to celebrate Jesus' birth, and as we wait for him to return, help us to trust in your promises. Bless the children as they share your message and assure us of Jesus' presence with us right now and forever. Amen.

A Meditation

- ℓ What are you waiting for? The question conveys a sense of urgency for action. It also brings to mind many things we wait for, often impatiently. The Advent season shines a spotlight on waiting. When it comes to all the preparations we need to make before Christmas, we are often hurried. "What are you waiting for?" you may ask a family member when the Christmas lights aren't put up yet or the house needs to be cleaned in time for your Christmas party. But Advent also reminds us how hard it is to wait for things we long for to come to pass. Kids can hardly wait to open their gifts on Christmas morning. But there are other things we wait for that seem so long in coming. We often grow weary, exhausted, even hopeless. "When will my suffering end?" "When will I have the answers I seek?" "When will God answer my prayers?" "When will Jesus return so all my misery will be over?" Waiting is hard. But, as the prophet Isaiah wrote, "Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God ... those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength." The children will soon share the message that God always comes through for us at just the right time. Though we wait upon the Lord, we do so confident in his promises fulfilled in Jesus. We wait with faith, rejoicing, hope and gratitude. So, what are we waiting for? Let's hear the Good News.

Waiting for Jesus With Faith

(Children gather in family living room scene with Christmas tree and a table with the Advent calendar centerpiece on it.)

- ____ 1. *(Referring to gift under tree)*. Look at this gift under the tree.
- ____ 2. *(Lifting up gift)* It says, "To our dear children." It's for all of us. I wonder what it could be.
- ____ 3. *(Looking around room)* The grown-ups are still in the kitchen cleaning up. Nobody will know if we take a little peek.

(Characters of parent(s) and grandparent(s) enter)

- ____ 4. *(Parent)* Oh no you don't! Gifts have to wait until Christmas!
- ____ 5. But I just can't stand the waiting. Christmas is still four weeks away!
- ____ 6. *(Grandparent)* Well, we made a special Advent calendar to help us wait. You cross out the numbers on the calendar each day. But on Sundays, I (or we) will give you a box to open with something to put on the calendar that will teach us how to wait upon the Lord.
- ____ 7. Can I open the first one? I can't wait to see what it is.
- ____ 8. *(Open box 1, found behind the Advent calendar)* Seeds. Hmm. My friend has an Advent calendar with chocolate behind each window, but, uh, seeds are nice too.
- ____ 9. *(Grandparent)* These seeds remind us how we wait upon the Lord with faith, knowing he will keep all his promises.
- ____ 10. *(Parent)* Just like the promise he made to Abraham. God said Abraham would have children and lots of descendants!
- ____ 11. *(Grandparent)* God's promise didn't seem possible, but just like we have faith that tiny seeds hidden in the dirt will grow into a beautiful plant, Abraham waited in faith for God to keep his promise.

Ⓜ The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." ... And Abram said, "Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a [servant] of my household will be my heir." And behold, the word of the Lord came to him: "This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir." And he brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven, and number

the stars, if you are able to number them ... So shall your offspring be.” And [Abram] believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:1-6).

___ 12. I remember that story. God gave Abram the new name, Abraham. He and his wife, Sarah, were very old when they had their son, Isaac.

___ 13. *(Grandparent, laughing)* Now that was a long wait! And at their age, I can just imagine how impossible God’s promise seemed!

___ 14. *(Parent)* But God kept his promise. And like this seed, Abraham’s family tree would grow to bless many—even us!

Ⓜ Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers ... and Jesse, the father of David the king (Matthew 1:2, 6).

___ 15. Didn’t Mary and Joseph come from King David’s family?

___ 16. *(Parent)* Yes! Through Abraham’s family, God sent his own Son, Jesus, to be our Savior.

(Characters dressed as Mary and Joseph make their way from the back, down the center aisle to the manger scene, off center of the living room set, or images of Mary and Joseph can appear on a screen.)

Ⓜ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to give birth (Luke 2:1-6).

Ⓜ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn (Luke 2:7).

___ 17. Hey! It’s only the first day of Advent and we already got to the part of the story where Jesus is born.

___ 18. But remember, Advent isn’t just about waiting to celebrate Jesus’ birth. We’re waiting for something else too.

___ 19. *(Picking up box 2)* Yeah, the day we get to finally open this gift.

___ 20. *(Grandparent, laughing)* Better yet, we wait in faith for Jesus to come again to take us to be with him forever, just as he promised.