

The Outlook's
**FAMILY
CHRISTMAS EVE
SERVICE**



Family Christmas Eve Worship

The following is a kid-friendly, sensory-rich, intergenerational worship service for Christmas Eve. It was developed for use in a church setting but could easily be adapted for home or classroom use. While this service could be held in any space, it may be easiest for people to be seated at a table.

Supplies

- Christmas Eve Bingo Cards for nonreaders (See appendix)
- Christmas Eve Bingo Cards for readers (See appendix)
- Stickers or markers to mark bingo cards
- Prizes
- Play-Doh, clay, or other “building supplies”

As worshippers enter, give them the appropriate bingo cards, markers, and Play-Doh to share in addition to their bulletin.

Order of worship

Welcome

Welcome worshippers to this special Christmas Eve service! Explain that throughout the service, they will hear words represented on their bingo cards. They should use their markers to play along throughout the service, and when they have “bingo” they should call out “Glory to God in the highest!” Appoint someone to pass out prizes as people win, but do not require anyone to check the winner’s card. Be sure to encourage them to have fun with it and shout out, even during prayers and speaking parts.

Call to worship

At Christmas, we remember how Jesus came to us.

Jesus came as a little baby.

Jesus came in the flesh to show us God’s love.

We show God’s love when we care for one another.

May we remember God’s love and God’s gift of children as we worship today.

Let us worship the Lord!

Opening prayer

Holy God, as we are wrapped in the love and light of Christmas joy, we pray that you will help us to remember your gifts at Christmas. Help us to remember your faithfulness. We give thanks for the hope, peace, joy, and love we find in you. Amen.

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Hymn

“Joy to the World” (v. 1, 4)

Reader’s theater (inspired by the birth narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke)

As pre-selected readers tell the Christmas story, encourage worshippers to use their Play-Doh to shape the characters in the story. Households or tablemates may work together. At the end of the service, you should have several manger scenes that people can admire. If it works in your context, have readers in appropriate costumes. As they read, they can gather to form a live nativity scene.

An angel visits Mary

Long ago, the angel Gabriel visited a young woman named Mary. She was going to marry a man named Joseph, but they were not married yet. The angel said hello and that the Lord was with Mary. She was very confused. Then the angel told Mary not to be afraid. God loved her and had an important job for her to do. She was going to have a very special baby! The baby would be named Jesus, and he would be part of God’s plan.

Mary said, “How is this going to happen?” The angel told her that the Holy Spirit would make it so, and that this baby would be the Son of God. Mary agreed to do the important job. She worshipped God and rejoiced. Mary knew her baby would be part of God’s dream for the world.

An angel visits Joseph

An angel also visited Joseph, Mary’s fiancé, while he was asleep dreaming. The angel told Joseph that he should still marry Mary. “She will have a baby boy, and you will name him Jesus,” said the angel. “He will save his people from their sins.” When Joseph woke up, he decided to do what the angel told him to do. All of this happened exactly as the prophets had said it would.

Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem

The emperor decided that the government needed a count of everyone who lived in the area. So, Mary and Joseph travelled back to Bethlehem, the town where Joseph’s family lived. They may have walked or ridden on a donkey. But when they got there, it was time for Mary to have her baby! Because there were so many visitors in the town, there were no rooms left in the inn. Mary and Joseph were probably in a stable where animals stayed. They cleaned up the baby Jesus, wrapped him in cloth and let him rest in a manger.

Hymn

“Away in a Manger” (v. 1)

Shepherds receive a special message

Not so far away, there were shepherds who lived with their sheep in the fields. An angel appeared before them, and God’s glory shined all around. The shepherds were really scared! But

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