



A SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS

INTERACTIVE CHILDREN &
FAMILY WORSHIP SERVICE

WRITTEN BY SARAH ARE

Notes for Worship Leadership:

This service aims to be engaging for a wide variety of people and ages in five key ways:

- 1) Structured around telling the story, the service makes it easy for little ones to follow along.*
- 2) The creative processional invites children to participate in a unique way.*
- 3) As a service of worship, the service focuses on telling the story of Jesus' birth as a community, allowing many in the congregation to participate in telling the good news.*
- 4) The kinesthetic prayer of confession creates space for kinesthetic listeners and learners to engage in worship fully.*
- 5) The creative offering includes a visual reminder of God's light in the world, as well as movement for wiggly worship participants.*

All leadership notes are written in italics, while written or spoken content are in normal font.

Preparation & Materials

- Unlit Advent wreath with candles and matches to light during the service.
- Two or three standing microphones in the chancel for those reading from the script.
- Printed and highlighted copies of the speaking parts for each of the scripture readings (see pages 10-15). Place each copy into envelopes labeled by scripture and speaking part (ex. "John 1:6-8, 19-23; John the Baptist"). Display these envelopes on a table near the entrance of the sanctuary to assign speaking parts to members as they enter. Make sure all envelopes are passed out so that all speaking roles will be fulfilled (by members young and old) for the scripture readings. You may wish to have some of these speaking parts read by clergy.
- For the star processional, make star and ribbon poles by attaching tinsel, ribbon, string, and cut out stars to dowel rods for children to wave as they process. See examples of this here: <https://www.pinterest.com/sanctifiedart/creative-christmas-worship-ideas/>. Arrange either large vases or umbrella holders at the front of the cancel for children to place their poles in after they process to the front of the sanctuary.

Preparation & Materials *(continued)*

- If you choose children's message option 2 (and have a screen in your sanctuary space to show video), create a short video asking children the following questions: "If you were in Bethlehem the night Jesus was born, what would you say to him? What gift would you bring to him?" Film their responses and compile them into a brief video. It can be both sincere and silly. Play the video in the service as a response to the Word.
- If using offering option 1, you will need: a paper star in each bulletin, writing utensils in each pew, rope/twine draped along the outer wall of the sanctuary (to clip prayers to) with clothespins clipped along the rope/twine. As their offering, worshipers will write or draw prayers on the paper stars. Instead of passing plates, worshipers will come forward to offer any monetary gifts to baskets placed at the front, then walk to the outer wall of the sanctuary where they will then clip their star prayers to the rope/twine before returning to their seats. This creative offering allows us to physically imitate approaching the manger by walking to the front of the church. It also symbolically multiplies the light by surrounding the congregation with stars.
- If using offering option 2, you will need: a strip of paper (1-2 inches wide; 6-8 inches long) in each bulletin and writing utensils in each pew. Invite worshipers to write a prayer on the paper as part of their offering, placing them in the offering plates as they are passed. Following Christmas, turn those strips of paper into a paper prayer chain that can be hung in the narthex or somewhere in the sanctuary as a visual reminder of our communal prayers.
- Consider draping white and gold fabric across the Table, and placing lit lanterns along the chancel.





ORDER OF WORSHIP

INTERACTIVE CHILDREN & FAMILY
WORSHIP SERVICE

Prelude & Star Processional

Gather all children and youth in the back of the sanctuary prior to the service. When the prelude begins, invite children to wave their star and ribbon poles as they process forward to the front of the sanctuary.

Prelude Music

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing,”¹ “It Came Upon A Midnight Clear,”² or “The First Noel”³

Welcome

Call to Worship & Lighting of the Advent Candles

Hope is:

Trusting that there is light, even in the dark.

(Light the candle of hope)

Peace is:

The wolf lying down with the lamb.

(Light the candle of peace)

Joy is:

Contagious sounds of Alleluia.

(Light the candle of joy)

Love is:

Unquenchable, never-ending, born in a manger, here today.

(Light the candle of love)

Christmas is:

A love song to the world; the light that shines in the darkness.

Let us make a joyful noise! Let us worship God.

(Light the Christ candle)

Opening Song "O Come All Ye Faithful"⁴

1 Charles Wesley (1739).

2 Edmund H. Sears (1849).

3 Anonymous (1833).

4 Author (attributed to): John Francis Wade; Translator: Frederick Oakeley (1841; alt).