

Christmas Worship Aids

Christmas Eve Service

Begin Christmas Eve worship in a darkened, quiet sanctuary. Read the Isaiah passage as candles around the sanctuary are lighted by one or several acolytes. Then invite the congregation to sing a Christmas praise song.

Although it cannot be proved, I think the angel choirs must have sung something like Psalm 96 when Jesus was born. It is easy to imagine groups of angels singing the short praise statements back and forth through the sky. So invite your congregation to join the angel choirs by reading the psalm responsively. Worship leaders and people could alternate, or the right side and left side of the congregation could alternate.

Psalm 96

Group 1	Group 2
verse 1a	verse 1b
2a	2b
3a	3b
4	5
6a	6b
7a	7b
8a	8b
9	10
11-12a	12b-13a
13b	13c

Or a Sunday school class (perhaps fourth-through sixth-graders) could prepare in advance to read the psalm responsively during the service.

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Prayers

On a night of such abundance it is very difficult to remember those who are homeless, those who are alone, those who don't care anymore. And yet, you would remember them, O God. In fact, you sent your son so that those who mourn would never be without a friend. For that act, we praise you and pray for the day when our memories can be as good as yours. Send us out with some kindness tonight. Send us out with enough freedom from our own wealth, whatever it is, that we can give it away. And bless our journey, that it takes us to those you especially love.
Amen.

Reveal yourself, O God, to each one of us here. Bring us to your glory and on to new days. In the name of Jesus, who never goes far. Let us marvel like shepherds and rejoice like angels. Let us rest with Mary and Joseph, who still have a long way to go on their journey home. As we open our gifts, may we remember your gift, its holiness and its abundance. And may we fall asleep tonight in deep thanksgiving that a star has come our way.
Amen.

Wise men stand on tiptoes; those of us not so learned join them – and we let amazement cover us head to toe. How can God come as a child and how can a child be God? We stand amazed and wear awe as our garment. Be with us and let calm return to our homes after the magnificence of the Christmas eruption. Let the calm marry the amazement and make us new.
Amen.

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