

ZOOM CRIB SERVICE

This service is designed to work with families of multiple generations worshipping together over Zoom. It should last about half an hour.

MUSIC: I have included a YouTube link for every hymn used. I've done congregational singing over Zoom by playing a version of the hymn with lyrics on it, and having everyone mute themselves and sing along at home, and have received positive feedback. If you have a choir, you may wish to use them instead – especially if they can record in your familiar church building, it may help people feel more at home, to see the building they love and the people they know.

I've tried to find a variety of styles for the music – some traditional choral arrangements, some more modern – but if you have a particularly strong musical tradition, you may wish to use different arrangements.

All the videos I've chosen have the lyrics on them, so it's easier for people to sing along. If you're making your own, make sure to include them.

IF YOU HAVE TIME, ENERGY, AND RESOURCES: For families with very young children, you can send them a "multi-sensory" pack to help the youngest ones engage during the service. This can include:

- Large peg dolls, one smaller one (still big enough not to choke on)
- Brown crinkle paper (or real hay)
- A small cardboard box for a manger (an earring box, for example)
- An angel figure – bonus if it's got interesting textures or if it's shiny
- A star decoration – again, bonus for texture or visual interest
- Farm animal figures
- Shakers to make noise during the music

In advance:

1. Make sure families have paper, pens, and a candle at home, and get supplies to any who don't (throw in some mince pies, as well, so they can join in the chat at the end).
2. Recruit readers, as you normally would (you'll need three).
3. Encourage families to prepare for the service:
 - Children can dress up as a character from the story
 - Families can create a "Prayer Space" next to the computer – their crib scene, the candle, some decorations, anything they want that will make that space feel special and Christmassy
4. Have YouTube links ready to go, and make sure you know how to use the "share computer sound" function and screen sharing.
5. Have all four PowerPoints open and ready for screen sharing.
6. Make sure you know how to create timed breakout rooms.

SERVICE:

OPENING:

Welcome people to the service.

Remind them that if they have pens and paper, they can draw the story as we go – at any time. While we're singing, or praying, or listening, or talking, they can be drawing. If they don't finish by the end of the service, that's fine – they can finish at any time. When the drawing is done, take a picture and share it on the church's Facebook page (or email it to _____, and they'll share it for you). If they have Lego or Playmobil or Play-doh, and they'd rather make a 3-d model instead of a drawing, they can do that too – again, take a picture and share it to our social media.

If you're in costume, you'll be invited to join in parts of the prayers at the end.

Leader: The Lord be with you

All: And also with you.

Leader: Advent has been a time of waiting. We remember how God's people waited in hope for the coming of the Saviour, the Messiah, the promised one, who would set them free. We remember that we are waiting for Jesus to come again. And we are waiting for a time when the world is safe from coronavirus, and we are free to live our lives – to hug, and play, and do so many things we haven't been able to do as normal. We may be sad, or scared, or angry, or worried. But we remember God's promise that "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it." At the darkest time of the year, in the darkest night, hope is born in Jesus – Emmanuel, God with us.

Remind everyone to mute themselves and sing along at home as you play "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" using the "share screen" and "share computer sound" functions.

YouTube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7xtpJ4Q_Q-4 (probably limit it to one or two verses)

STORY AND SINGING:

FIRST READING: Use the Annunciation PowerPoint to tell the story of the Annunciation, and then open the floor to discussion about the pictures, using the question on the final slide.

Remind everyone to mute themselves and sing along at home as you play "Once in Royal David's City" (either stop after 2 verses or play at least 4 – the third verse is the cringe-worthy one and you shouldn't end on it!): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdDeFqXXG-s>

OR "O Little Town of Bethlehem" (modern version): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vc4CexxlX8>

SECOND READING: Use the Nativity PowerPoint to tell the story of Jesus's birth, and then open the floor to discussion about the "secret Christmas symbols" in the *Jose y Maria* picture on the final slide.

Encourage everyone to turn off the lights in the room they're in and light their candle. If they're in the room with their Christmas tree, why not turn its lights on too?

Then each family gather children in laps (if the children want to) and sing "Silent Night" together:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kjCOiH-kbs8>

THIRD READING: Use the Shepherds PowerPoint to read the poem. Then the leader reads:

Leader: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light! Those who dwelt in the land of deep darkness, upon them has light shined! For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, Almighty God, the Prince of Peace!

Have everyone turn their lights on and sing "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing":

Modern version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRdJwYpd4Qw>

Traditional version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCt1s44cfMM>

PRAYERS AND CLOSING:

Use the Zoom Crib Service Prayers Powerpoint to do the prayers. Everyone turn their microphones back on and join in the chaos! The PowerPoint has a note on when to blow out our candles.

Before the closing hymn, announce that there will be time for chatting in breakout rooms afterwards if anyone would like to stay, with a glass of their preferred beverage and their preferred snack. You may want to rotate the fellowship breakout rooms, so everyone has a chance to speak to more people.

Have everyone mute themselves again and sing "O Come, All Ye Faithful":

Choral, with lyrics (but slightly pedestrian): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8dqI4-bVPU>

Choral, better production values, but no lyrics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZYZEr3JtZY>

Modern orchestral, with exhortation to worship by the leader:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIAnGIE9xpY>

OR "Joy to the World": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rjinc8ctq5c> (modern version)