



Celebration Christmas Day Service in the Home

1. Opening Prayer: O God, who makes us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of thy only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that as we joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold him when he shall come again; who lives and reigns with thee and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen*

2. Read: Luke 2:1-20, and if you have the time, read Mt. 1:18-2:12.

Options to respond to the good news in Luke and/or Matthew

- Have everyone retell the story in their own words, remembering as much detail as you can. Have others feel free to chime in with things like: "Hey, you forgot the part about ____."
- Write "Christmas is ..." on a sheet of paper and have each family member share what Christmas means to them.
- Act out the Christmas story found in Luke 2 with the whole family.
- Put imaginations to work by talking about what kind of letter you would write to God this Christmas.
- And/or consider the following devotion from Pastor Toby:

Christmas is the amazing story of how in the fullness of time Jesus came into this world as a child, into a world that he himself made. Two books in our Bible called "gospels" tell us the story of Christmas. The two gospels take turns telling us different things about the birth of Jesus.

The Gospel of Luke tells almost twice as much as Matthew. We think this is because Luke had long talks with Mary, Jesus's mother. She must have told Luke everything she could think of. Well, Luke tells us how Jesus did not come to rich people, but he mostly came to those who were poor and needy, poverty stricken and destitute. When Jesus grew up and began to preach in his own home town he read out loud from the prophecy of Isaiah, saying of himself:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18).

And, only in Luke do we hear how there was no room for them in the inn, and about how Mary laid Jesus in a trough where animals eat (a manger). And, we learn that angels appeared to shepherds as they watched their flocks by night. Like the shepherds, Jesus and Mary and Joseph, they too had no home that night, no soft pillows upon which to lay their heads. Jesus grew up to be like a shepherd in that he also had "no where to lay his head."

Matthew, a different story teller of Christmas, does not tell us about the manger, or about poverty stricken shepherds. He tells us different parts of the story, the parts that show how Jesus is the promised king. Matthew tells of people called Magi who came from the ends of the earth to worship this new baby born as the King of kings. The Magi had not followed God before Christmas, but on Christmas they came to see Jesus as the new king of the world. So, Matthew shows us the global and international spread of the story of Jesus. The precious story of Christmas is now known to almost everyone in the world!

Be thankful that you know the story of Jesus' birth, and life, and that you know he will come again in great glory, and we will all see Jesus.

3. As a family, or by yourself, sing a Christmas song from memory.
4. Close family worship by making the song, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, your prayer, praying:

*Dear Lord Jesus,
What can I give You, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can give You: I give you my heart. Amen!*

Merry Christmas 2011

celebration