

The Advent Wreath

**A Worship Service Program
for Use With the Advent Wreath**

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About This Program

Is your church looking for a meaningful way to enhance your Advent worship service? If so, *The Advent Wreath* weekly worship skits can provide you with the material to do just that. Each skit, centered around the traditional holiday Advent wreath, involves 4 to 5 speakers, lasts approximately 5 minutes, and addresses one particular aspect of the Christmas story.

Four themes, represented by the four candles on the wreath, are discussed in turn each week: The Candle of Prophecy, The Candle of Bethlehem, The Candle of the Angels, and The Candle of the Shepherds. The fifth Candle of Christ, located in the center of the wreath, is lit on either Christmas eve or Christmas day.

Speaking parts are minimal, allowing for the presentation of each skit to be done by children, adults, or even families.

THE CANDLE OF PROPHECY

SPEAKER #1: Today is the fourth Sunday before Christmas and the beginning of the season of Advent. The word "Advent" comes from a Latin word meaning "a coming." Advent is a time for Christians to prepare for "the coming" of Jesus as we remember His birth in Bethlehem long ago. Just as the season of Lent is a six-week spiritual preparation before Easter, so Advent is recognized within the church calendar as a four-week spiritual preparation before Christmas.

SPEAKER #2: Each of the four candles fastened to the wreath represent one Sunday before Christmas. The fifth white candle - representing Christ and His birth - is placed in the wreath's center, just as Jesus is to be at the center of our lives. The wreath is circular, having neither beginning nor end, symbolizing the infiniteness of God and His unending presence and love for us. Evergreen branches are fastened to the wreath to symbolize the everlasting life we have through our belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as our Savior. Today we light the first purple candle of the Advent wreath which is called "The Candle of Prophecy." (*Lights the candle.*)

SPEAKER #3: Reading from the Book of Isaiah 7:14: “Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son...” A prophecy is a message from God that is brought forth to God’s people by a chosen prophet. Throughout the Old Testament of the Bible, as early as the first Book of Genesis, God promised to send a Savior to deliver His people. Isaiah’s prophecy, foretelling the Savior would be born to a virgin, was recorded over 700 years before the birth of Jesus. This prophecy is only one of over 200 which were fulfilled when Jesus came as God’s gift to mankind.

SPEAKER #4: Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 1:21: “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.” The name given to the Son of God was in itself a prophecy, for the Hebrew meaning of the name Jesus is, “He will save.” This refers, of course, to our sins. “Jesus” was more than the name the Son of God would be called, it was what He would do.

SPEAKER #5: The prophecies in God’s Word foretold the Savior would come from the House of David, be a light to mankind, arrive in Bethlehem, descend from the tribe of Judah and be born of a virgin. God’s Word is God’s promise, and “The Promise” came.

HYMN: “Oh Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel”

THE CANDLE OF BETHLEHEM

SPEAKER #1: Today is the third Sunday before Christmas and we light the second purple candle of the Advent wreath which is called "The Candle of Bethlehem." (*Lights candle.*) Reading from the Book of Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting." For centuries, God promised He would send a Savior, and it was the Old Testament prophet, Micah, who named Bethlehem as being set apart for the birthplace of this Salvation. These words of Micah were recorded over 500 years before the birth of Jesus.

SPEAKER #2: Micah's words, "thou, Bethlehem Ephratah," are delivered in a tone of significant honor. How beautifully fitting that the Lord be born in the city of Bethlehem whose Hebrew meaning is "House of Bread," for during His adult ministry, Jesus Himself would proclaim to be the "Bread of Life." Reading from the Gospel of John 6:35: "And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." Not only was our Savior –

SPEAKER #2: (*Continued.*) as the "Bread of Life"
- born in the "House of Bread," He was laid in a manger which was nothing more than a feeding trough for the animals to eat from.

SPEAKER #3: Reading from the Gospel of Luke 2:1-6: "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and lineage of David: to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered."

SPEAKER #4: This decree was an order by the Roman government organizing a tax poll throughout the empire. Such a census, occurring only every fourteen years, required Joseph, the carpenter from Nazareth, to return to the city from which his ancestors had come, Bethlehem. A strenuous journey of approximately five days and covering seventy miles was now before him. Mary, being great with child, accompanied Joseph.

End of Freeview

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