

Behold the Lamb
Advent Worship Series – Week 4
The Wise Seek Him Still

WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINES

Each worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. It is recommended that the headings of each section of the service be included in the bulletin.

Announcements & Offering

Drama: Gift Exchange

Call to Worship:

They had found the Child King! These wise men were used to being in the presence of kings, but this Child made them feel they were in the presence of the King of kings. What else could they do, but kneel and worship Him. They sought a Star but found a Savior. In Him they found truth...hope...purpose...and so much more. It’s the same today as it was then...wise men still seek Him.

(Christmas Hearts, page 93)

SB#116 – O come, all ye faithful HC#140 – O Come, All Ye Faithful	TB-496 – Adeste Fideles HC-140	HTD3 –T1 (3 vs.) HCD12-T20
Additional Optional Songs		
SB#100 – Angels, from the realms of glory	TB-398 – Come and Worship (Regent Sq.)	HTD4-T12 (4 vs.)
SB#114 – Light of the world HC#146 – Here I am to Worship	TB-653 – Here I am to Worship HC-146	HCD13-T16
SB#103 – Christians awake, salute the happy morn	TB-476 – same	HTD10-T1 (3 vs.)
SB#115 – If I were a star then I would shine, shine, shine	TB-773- Noel	No CD
SB#126 – The first noel the angel did say	TB-857 – The First Noel	HTD6-T18 (3 vs.)

Lighting of Advent Candle

Reader 1: As with gladness men of old
Did the guiding star behold,
As with joy they hailed its light,
Leading onward, beaming bright,
So, most gracious Lord, may we
Ever more be led to thee.

Reader 2: Shine the light of your love on those who wander aimlessly. Lead them to you.

Reader 1: As with joyful steps they sped
To that lowly manger bed,
There to bend the knee before
Him whom Heaven and earth adore,
So may we with willing feet
Ever seek the mercy seat.

Reader 2: Shine the light of your love on those who cannot find their way in this darkened world. Lead them to you.

Reader 1: As they offered gifts most rare
At that manger rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy,
Pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.

Reader 2: Shine the light of your love on us as we search for meaning and purpose in life.
Lead us to you. *(Words by William Chatterton Dix)*

[A person lights the candle during song]

HC#123 – Shine on Us	HC-123	HCD11–T13
Additional Optional Songs		
Chorus – O come let us adore him	TB-496 – Adeste Fideles (last half of tune)	No CD
HC#10 – The Light has Come	HC-10	HCD1-T10
HC#99 – Shine, Jesus, Shine	HC-99	HCD8-T19
HC#119 – I love you, Lord	HC-119	HCD10-T19
HC#187 – Jesus, Messiah	HC-187	HCD17-T17
HC#220 – Incarnate	HC-220	HCD20-T20
HC#226 – I Worship You	HC-226	HCD21-T16

Pastoral Prayer

Scripture or Video Segment:

Title: Matthew Video Bible
Topic: The Visit of the Magi
Start: Matt. 2:1-12
Start cue: “After Jesus was born...
End cue: “...they returned to their country by another route.”

Message – The Wise Seek Him Still

SB#101 – As with gladness men of old	TB-276 – Dix	HTD11-T3
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#120 – In the Manger	HC-120	HCD10-T20
Chorus – O come let us adore him	TB-496 – Adeste Fideles (last half of tune)	No CD
HC#219 – King of Kings, Majesty	HC-219	HCD20-T19
HC#220 – Incarnate	HC-220	HCD20-T20
HC#226 – I Worship You	HC-226	HCD21-T16

Benediction:

Thankfully, Lord, there are times when my heart seeks you as the wise men did...when I am diligent in searching for you...when I am delighted at any sign pointing the way...when I am down on my knees in your presence. Multiply those times in my life, Lord.

Thank you for the stars and the dreams and the Scriptures and the many ways you reveal yourself. Give me eyes to see you in the circumstances of my life, ears to hear you in the Scriptures, feet to find you in the Bethlehems of this world, hands to bring you my gifts, knees to bow before you, and a heart overflowing with worship.

(Moments with the Savior, page 46)

Vocal Benediction – HC#140 – O Come, All Ye Faithful SB#85 – O come, all ye faithful	HC-140 TB-552 – Adeste Fideles	HCD12-T20 HTD3-T1 (3 vs.)
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#128 – My Tribute	HC-128	HCD11-T18
HC#149 – In Christ Alone	HC-149	HCD13-T19
HC#151 – Fairest Lord Jesus	HC-151	HCD14-T11
SB#112 – It was on a starry night HC#180	TB-535 – same HC-280	HCD16-T20
HC#260 – Go, Tell it on the Mountain	HC-260	HCD24-T20

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Candle Lighting

Reader 1: As with gladness men of old
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Reader 2: Shine the light of your love on those who wander aimlessly. Lead them to you.

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Reader 2: Shine the light of your love on us as we search for meaning and purpose in life.
Lead us to you.

(Words by William Chatterton Dix)

[*Light Candle*]

Week #4	
DRAMA	
Gift Exchange	
By Martyn Scott Thomas	
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Scripture:	Matthew 2:1-12
Synopsis:	Joseph tries to return one of the gifts given to baby Jesus.
Characters:	Rita – Clerk at the return desk at Bloomingdales. Joseph – Father of Jesus.
Props/Costumes:	An ornate jar (for the myrrh). Biblical costume for Joseph, modern dress for Rita. Rita could have a computer on the desk.
Setting:	A desk or table for the return area with a sign that reads “Returns/Exchanges.”
Running Time:	2:30 minutes.

[Joseph walks up to the return desk with an ornate jar containing myrrh.]

Rita: Welcome to Bloomingdales. Do you have an item to return?

Joseph: Yes, *[places jar on desk]* I'd like to return this.

Rita: *[not looking at jar, typing on computer]* Did you purchase the item or was it a gift?

Joseph: It was a gift.

Rita: Do you have a gift receipt?

Joseph: No, I don't.

Rita: *[looking up]* Then how can you prove it was purchased at Bloomingdales?

Joseph: I can't. But this is the fifth different store I've been to today. You're my last hope.

Rita: *[examines jar]* What is it?

Joseph: It's myrrh.

Rita: Myrrh?

Joseph: Yes, myrrh.

Rita: Who gave you myrrh?

Joseph: Balthazar the Great.

Rita: Was it a birthday present?

Joseph: Yes, but not for me. It was a gift for my newborn son.

Rita: And your reason for the return?

Joseph: It's an inappropriate gift.

Rita: The jar is beautiful. How can it be inappropriate?

Joseph: Myrrh is used for embalming dead bodies.

Rita: Embalming?

Joseph: Embalming. Not quite what we were hoping for.

Rita: What kind of nitwit gives embalming [*thinking*] stuff to a baby?

Joseph: Actually, Balthazar is a very wise man.

Rita: How wise can he be? He gave your baby myrrh.

Joseph: He and his friends traveled weeks to present their gifts to our child.

Rita: What did his friends bring, grave clothes and a garden plot?

Joseph: Actually, gold and frankincense.

Rita: I'd say those two are the wise men.

Joseph: Anyway, those things we can use. But, we just don't have use for myrrh. At least not yet – we hope. So, can I return it for a refund?

Rita: The best I can do for you is store credit and that's only if we sell myrrh.

Joseph: And if you don't?

Rita: Have you tried Macy's? I hear they have a new home décor section. If you don't mention the myrrh inside, maybe they'll take the jar.

Joseph: Macy's sent me here. Like I said, you're my last hope.

Rita: [*checking computer*] Well, Mr., uh, what did you say your name was?

Joseph: Joseph.

Rita: Well, Mr. Joseph, I'm not finding any myrrh on the computer. It looks like you're stuck with it.

Joseph: Thank you for looking. I guess we'll just keep it. I mean, it is used to preserve bodies, so I don't imagine it'll go bad.

Rita: And it is a very nice jar. Is there anything else I can help you with?

Joseph: Yes, can you direct me to your luggage department?

Rita: Oh, are you planning a trip? Where are you going?

Joseph: I'm not really sure. I just know that we need to leave quickly.

Rita: Well, I hear Egypt is absolutely lovely this time of year.

Joseph: Thank you for all of your help. [*turns to leave*] Egypt, huh?

[Blackout]

Behold the Lamb
The Wise Seek Him Still
Advent Sermon – Week 4

By Colonel Henry Gariepy

We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him (Matthew 2:2).

The Christmas story hosts a cast of fascinating characters, each who speak their own message to the centuries. The Gospels present Mary in obedient faith, the humble carpenter Joseph, the shepherds, the angel Gabriel, Elizabeth and Zechariah, the innkeeper, and Herod the evil plotter. But among these personas in “the greatest story ever told,” the story of the Wise Men as recorded by Matthew has especially captured our interest and imagination. Their relationship to the Christmas story speaks a powerful message to us once again this Advent season.

THE STAR

These devout astrologers in Babylon had studied the sky for long hours at a time until they knew every fixed star. One night they noted an unusual heavenly phenomenon, a star in the East that shone with such heavenly brilliance that it spoke to them of the coming of a great king.

Salvationists have long been blessed by Evangeline Booth’s beautiful song, *Star in the East*, which speaks of God’s message to the world through this heavenly light:

There's a light in the sky, though the sky be dark;
It's the light of the Star in the East.
There's a song in the storm, though the storm be long;
It's the song that my heart loves the best.
It's the song that broke over Bethlehem's hill,
The angel's song: Peace on earth, good will!
And the song made the whole wide world to thrill,
Lovely song of the Star in the East.

The Star in the East reminds us that God leaves no person without a sign of himself. Over the horizon of each life, God places his sign, which if we follow will lead us to himself. It may be the light that radiates from a Christian parent, loved one, or friend. Or a light may beckon to us from God’s Word, our church, or a ray of truth from one who has made the journey. Sometimes He leads us by the star of sorrow or trial that shines most clearly through the darkest night.

Many signs this Christmas would point us to Christ. What is it that the Lord is using to call you to himself, to lead you to the ultimate discovery and destiny of your life? And will you, as those of old, follow and find what God has in store for you?

THE JOURNEY

The Star sent the Wise Men on the most important journey of their lives, on perhaps the most

extraordinary trek of all history. Their journey exposed them to many dangers along the long and torturous route. Over course terrain they trekked, across burning desert, exposed to hazards of storm and plunder of prized caravan. Theirs was a journey of courage.

They would have to forsake the comfort of loved ones, the warmth of hearth, the security of homeland, and the comforts, pleasures, and perks of their palaces. It was a journey that required commitment.

For the Wise Men the Star in the East launched them on a journey of venturesome faith, in quest of discovery of the meaning of God's revelation through a Star. They perceived that an ultimate meaning and destiny was in that Star.

God calls each of us to make a journey to the Christ of Bethlehem's manger. He calls us from our security, our comfort, our pleasures, to the things that really matter. He calls us from the material to the spiritual, to life's supreme discovery and eternal destiny.

Will we, with courage and commitment as the Wise Men of old, make that journey of the heart? Will we leave behind lesser things to find for ourselves the very Son of God Who came to planet earth in Bethlehem's crude manger, to become our Savior? Henry Van Dyke wrote of a fourth Wise Man who started out but confronted with the hazards of the journey turned back and missed the greatest discovery of a lifetime.

We too would come from afar, from the land of sin and self, and discover for ourselves the One who is the King of the universe.

THE GIFTS

Legend has made the Magi kings, and given them names associated with the three gifts mentioned in Scripture.

'Caspar' brought gold, a gift of substance. It is believed that it was this gift that sustained the holy family during their flight and exile in Egypt. How providential are the ways of God. We live in a world of deprivation, destitution, of pain and need. These needs levy many calls and claims upon our resources, to give of our gift of substance. 'Melchior' brought the gift of frankincense. Because of its fragrance it can represent the inner treasure of thought and influence, the intangibles of life. With the songwriter we would pray to the Christ of Christmas, "My life, my influence I bring, and crown Thee everlasting King."

'Belthazar' brought the gift of myrrh, a costly, odorous gum used for embalming. Even at the cradle we see represented the shadow of the cross. This gift can represent our sorrow and suffering, a bitter gift, however strangely, often is the harder one for us to give to Christ. We may prefer to keep it for its bitter protest. Are there things in our lives that have the touch of death? Failures we may grieve over? Broken relationships? An open grave we carry around in our heart? If so, let us bring and leave them at the foot of the cross, where the ultimate suffering of mankind took place.

The three kings brought their best treasures. They laid at the feet of Jesus their noblest gifts. May our motto be, “My utmost for the Highest.”

THEY CAME TO WORSHIP

The Wise Men made the long journey to the Christ child, not for personal gain. The account records their own words, “We have come to worship him.”

The chronicler records that they “came to the house” (Matt. 2:11) .The Star led them, not to a palace, but to the humble home of the Holy Family. Poets and those who have made models of the Nativity have often telescoped the scene of the Wise Men with that of the shepherds in the stable. We have no problem with such poetic license, but this verse and the slaughter of the innocents two years and under, suggest a later time for the arrival of the Wise Men.

Those who had made such a long journey from afar, now gazed upon the One Who had traveled through time and space. Upon seeing the Christ child, the record states, “They bowed down and worshipped him.” Those we call Wise Men, in that humble home found Wisdom Incarnate, “In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col. 2:3).

Why are we born? The time-honored truth states: “To glorify God, and fully enjoy him forever.” When we find Christ, we find our destiny, our purpose for living.

THEY RETURNED A DIFFERENT WAY

We read that Herod, troubled by the turn of events, called upon his theological scholars. A “King of the Jews” sounded like a revolution – the ultimate threat to his throne. Herod, the “master assassin” intended to have the child murdered, to eliminate a political rival.

God, in a dream to the Wise Men, exposed the treacherous plan of Herod. To escape the cunning and cruelty of the king, “They returned to their country by another route” (Matt. 2:12b).

When we truly find Christ, Who made the ultimate sacrifice as the Lamb of God to take away our sin, we can no longer travel the same road. Life becomes transformed and we embark on a totally new and radiant path of life. The Wise Men --

- Foresaw the greatness of our Lord’s Advent,
- Followed God’s sign that led to Christ,
- Found the One Who is the Bright Morning Star
- Forsook their former way and went a new route

May we on our pilgrimage of life, follow their example of courage and commitment. For the wise seek Christ still, and in finding Him, find life abundant and eternal.

Prayer

Let us once again express our testimony and prayer in the lovely carol by William Dix that memorializes the story of the Wise Men of Christmas:

As with gladness men of old/Did the guiding star behold,
As with joy they hailed its light, Leading onward, beaming bright,
So, most gracious Lord, may we/Ever more be led to thee.

As with joyful steps they sped/To that lowly manger bed,
There to bend the knee before/Him whom Heaven and earth adore,
So may we with willing feet/Ever seek the mercy seat.

As they offered gifts more rare/At that manger rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy, Pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heavenly King.