

Behold the Lamb
Advent Worship Series – Week 5
The Cradle, the Cross, the Crown

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: An Empty Manger

Call to Worship:

The story of Jesus doesn’t begin with Jesus. God had been at work for a long time. Saving people from their sin and from themselves is an old business. Jesus is God’s attempt to put in human form what he had been trying to say to humanity since the beginning of time.

The real-life Jesus who lived in history—his birth, life, death, and resurrection—is connected to what went on *before*. The word “fulfilled” is often used in the Gospels. It means that something people were waiting to have happen did happen. That’s why Matthew says that such and such happened... “that it might be fulfilled.” Jesus was a surprise to a lot of people—but he shouldn’t have been.

Here’s the best part, according to Matthew: not only is everything in the past fulfilled in Jesus, but *we* are fulfilled in Jesus. Matthew tells us that our wildest dreams are not just dreams; they are dreams fulfilled in Jesus. You and I are part of God’s story—past, present, and future. This is no accident. God intended this all along.

(The Message, page 8)

SB#167 – Hail, thou once despised Jesus	TB-370 - Hyfrydol	HTD1-T14
Additional Optional Songs		
SB#358 – Crown Him with many crowns,	TB-162 - Diademata	HTD1-T8
HC#161 – My Great Redeemer’s Praise	HC-161	HCD15-T11
HC#248 – Amazing grace (My chains are gone)	HC-248	HCD23-T18

The Sign of Emmanuel

Responsive Reading:

Leader: The earth is the Lord's,

Group: and everything in it.

Leader: The world is the Lord's,

Group: and all who live in it;

Reader 1: for the Lord founded the world upon the seas...

Reader 2: ...and established it upon the waters.

Reader 1: In the book of the prophet Isaiah, it is written: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Emmanuel.

Group: God with us."

Leader: This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about:

Reader 1: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

Reader 2: Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

Reader 1: But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Group: The prophecy was fulfilled.

Reader 2: When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son.

Leader: And he gave him the name Jesus.

Group: Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?

Reader 1: He who has clean hands and a pure heart.

Group: Who may stand in his holy place?

Reader 2: He who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.

Reader 1: He will receive blessing from the Lord,

Reader 2: and vindication from God his Savior.

Leader: Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob.

Reader 1: Lift up your heads, O you gates;

Reader 2: be lifted up, you ancient doors,

Leader: that the King of glory may come in.

Group: Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

(Acts of Worship, page 89-90)

Leader:

The Cross was not something that *happened* to Jesus—He came to die; the Cross was His purpose in coming. He is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world” (Rev. 13:8). The incarnation of Christ would have no meaning without the Cross. The purpose of the incarnation was redemption. God came in the flesh to take sin away, not to accomplish something for himself. The Cross is the central event in time and eternity, and the answer to all the problems of both.

HC#123 – Shine on Us	HC-123	HCD11–T13
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#127 – How Deep the Father’s Love for us	HC-127	HCD11-T17
HC#137 – Worthy is the Lamb	HC-137	HCD-12-T17
HC#162 – The Power of the Cross	HC-162	HCD15-T12
HC#164 – Before the throne of God above	HC-164	HCD15-T14
HC#184 – Behold the Lamb	HC-184	HCD17-T16
HC#207 – Grace Alone	HC-207	HCD19-T17
HC#234 – Beneath the Cross	HC-234	HCD22-T14
HC#253 – Jesus Paid it All	HC-253	HCD24-T13

Reading:

The heart of salvation is the Cross of Christ. The reason salvation is so easy to obtain is that it cost God so much. The Cross was the place where God and sinful man merged with a tremendous collision and where the way to life was opened. But all the cost and pain of the collision was absorbed by the heart of God.

(My Utmost for His Highest, April 6)

HC#98 – Nothing But Thy Blood	HC-98	HCD8-T18
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#94 – Lamb of God	HC-94	HCD8-T14
HC#127 – How Deep the Father’s Love for us	HC-127	HCD11-T17
HC#137 – Worthy is the Lamb	HC-137	HCD-12-T17
HC#162 – The Power of the Cross	HC-162	HCD15-T12
HC#164 – Before the throne of God above	HC-164	HCD15-T14
HC#184 – Behold the Lamb	HC-184	HCD17-T16
HC#207 – Grace Alone	HC-207	HCD19-T17
HC#234 – Beneath the Cross	HC-234	HCD22-T14
HC#253 – Jesus Paid it All	HC-253	HCD24-T13

Pastoral Prayer:

God of our salvation, you call us to reason with you. But is it reasonable that my sins, blatant as neon in the night, should be washed white as snow in the blood of God himself? Is it reasonable that one who lives in constant rebellion would be saved by the very one against whom he or she has rebelled? No, loving God, it is not reasonable, but it is absolutely true. There, on the altar of a cross, hung a willing Lamb with thorns upon his brow: my redeeming sacrifice. How I praise you for the wonder of this sacrificial act, for it is the world’s only hope of eternal life.

(Praise and Worship Bible, page 899)

Message: The Cradle, the Cross, the Crown

Invitation Song – SB#439 – There is a Message	TB-879 – There is a Message	No CD
HC#139 – There is a Message	HC-139	HCD12-T19

SB#358 – Crown Him with many crowns	TB-162 – Diademata	HTD1-T8
HC#241 – Crown Him with many crowns	HC-241	HCD23-T11
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#108 – It is Well	HC-108	HCD9-T18
HC#141 – All Hail the Power	HC-141	HCD13-T11
HC#149 – In Christ Alone	HC-149	HCD13-T19
HC#161 – My Great Redeemer’s Praise	HC-161	HCD15-T11

Benediction:

You are astounding, O Lord; God. We are humbled to know that nothing about your children is hidden from you or goes without your care. Before our birth, you know us all and call us by name. In the impetuosity and inexperience of our youth, you forgive our blunders, redirect our steps and empower us by your spirit. In our old age you renew us and give us wings to fly. And then you give us eternity. We look to you, Lord, for salvation. All our hope is in you.

(Praise and Worship Bible, page 966)

HC#128 – My Tribute	HC-128	HCD11-T18
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#141 – All Hail the Power	HC-141	HCD13-T11
HC#149 – In Christ Alone	HC-149	HCD13-T19
HC#161 – My Great Redeemer’s Praise	HC-161	HCD15-T11
HC#248 – Amazing grace (My chains are gone)	HC-248	HCD23-T18
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Week #5	
DRAMA An Empty Manger By Martyn Scott Thomas © 2003 by Martyn Scott Thomas. All rights reserved. Used by permission.	
Scripture:	Luke 2:1-7
Synopsis:	The owner of the Bethlehem Inn tries to decide what to do with his manger turned crib.
Characters:	Simon – the owner of the Bethlehem Inn. Priscilla – Simon’s Wife.
Props/Costumes:	A work table, some boxes and scraps of wood. Biblical costumes.
Setting:	The workshop of the Bethlehem Inn. The boxes and wood should be scattered around the table in the center of the room.
Running Time:	3:00 minutes.

[Simon is looking around the room, obviously not finding what he needs. Priscilla calls out from offstage.]

Priscilla: *[calling out]* Simon? Simon?

Simon: In here, Dear.

Priscilla: *[enters]* Simon, what are you doing out here? It’s time for bed.

Simon: I know. I’m just looking for something.

Priscilla: Well, look tomorrow. The last few days have been pretty tough, but the Inn is mostly empty now. Let’s just go to bed.

Simon: But I need to find something for the animals.

Priscilla: The animals? Can’t it wait until the morning?

Simon: No, I need something for their feed.

Priscilla: What’s wrong with the manger?

Simon: Nothing. I just don’t think they should be eating out of it anymore.

Priscilla: Because of the baby?

Simon: Yes, because of the baby. I know you think that I’m a horrible person at times, but every once in a while I can show compassion.

Priscilla: Yes, you can. Now, let's go to bed. The animals can wait until the morning.

Simon: [*not listening to her*] It's not like the manger is anything special. I just keep seeing that baby lying there, so peaceful. It was almost holy.

Priscilla: According to some, it was more than almost.

Simon: You mean the shepherds?

Priscilla: And the angels.

Simon: Priscilla, for the last time, there were no angels. You can't believe shepherds. There's a reason they live out there with the sheep – they're all nuts.

Priscilla: If you don't believe them, why won't you use the manger?

Simon: Maybe I will. Listen to me. That baby was not the Messiah. We've been waiting over 400 years and we'll probably wait 400 more.

Priscilla: That's not what you thought three nights ago. What about the couple that was in our room? The ones that claimed their son was the Messiah just so they could get a place to stay? You were pretty certain then.

Simon: I was out of my mind. We had people everywhere in this inn. All I saw was more money for us. I would've sold our kids if the price was right. [*pausing*] Where are the kids anyway?

Priscilla: They're at my mother's house. Remember?

Simon: Oh yeah. I can't wait until they're home and everything is back to normal. We'll go back to running a quiet little inn in Bethlehem and there will be no more talk of Messiahs. If the Messiah is going to come from Bethlehem, he's going to have to do it from someone else's home.

Priscilla: So, what about the manger?

Simon: I'll make a new one. That one is pretty old anyway. The animals deserve something new.

Priscilla: Do you have the wood to make a new one?

Simon: That's what I've been looking for. I don't think there's enough here. I'll buy some tomorrow. I hear you can get scraps from the Romans pretty cheap.

Priscilla: From the Romans?

Simon: Yeah, after crucifixions, they sell off the cross beams for scrap. If you carve them out right, you can make two or three mangers and still have a little extra left over for fire wood.

Priscilla: Don't you think it's a little morbid using that wood?

Simon: No, I think it's economical. Besides, it's only for the animals.

Priscilla: Well, I'm just glad you didn't do that before the baby was born.

Simon: Why not?

Priscilla: It's bad enough that baby had to be placed in a manger. That will be with him for the rest of his life. Can you imagine being placed in a manger made from a cross? It's like he'd have a cross hanging over him for the rest of his life.

Simon: I guess you're right. I wouldn't wish that on anyone.

[*Blackout*]

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The Sign of Emmanuel

Scripture: Psalm 24:1-7; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25

Theme: The birth of Christ

Cast: Leader, Reader 1, Reader 2, Group

Leader: The earth is the Lord's,

Group: and everything in it.

Leader: The world is the Lord's,

Group: and all who live in it;

Reader 1: for the Lord founded the world upon the seas...

Reader 2: ...and established it upon the waters.

Reader 1: In the book of the prophet Isaiah, it is written: "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Emmanuel.

Group: God with us."

Leader: This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about:

Reader 1: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

Reader 2: Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

Reader 1: But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Group: The prophecy was fulfilled.

Reader 2: When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave

birth to a son.

Leader: And he gave him the name Jesus.

Group: Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?

Reader 1: He who has clean hands and a pure heart.

Group: Who may stand in his holy place?

Reader 2: He who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.

Reader 1: He will receive blessing from the Lord,

Reader 2: and vindication from God his Savior.

Leader: Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, O God of Jacob.

Reader 1: Lift up your heads, O you gates;

Reader 2: be lifted up, you ancient doors,

Leader: that the King of glory may come in.

Group: Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

(Acts of Worship, page 89-90)

Behold the Lamb
The Cradle, The Cross, The Crown
Advent Sermon – Week 5

By Colonel Henry Gariepy

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

The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown – these three great symbols of our faith are as “rites of passage” in Christ’s life, and therefore in the life of humanity.

The Cradle

God sent his Son as a baby to the doorstep of the world! He was born, not in a king’s palace, not on the famed Appian Way, but in a lowly stable, cradled in a manger from which animals were fed.

That rough-hewn cradle, cushioned with straw, hosted the most stupendous miracle of the universe – God becoming man. That lowly cradle launched the mighty miracle of the Incarnation – the One Who spoke the universe into existence, taking upon himself our humanity.

The nativity scene, the crèche of Christmas, serves to remind us of what Christmas is all about. Christmas is far more than pretty parties, Santa Clauses with cotton beards, the blaring of carols over loudspeakers, our shopping madness.

“Cribb’d, cabined and confined” within the contours of a human infant in that cradle is the heart of Christmas, the heart of God wrapped in human flesh!

The cradle of Bethlehem helps us see beyond the trimmings and trappings of the season, to see --

- beyond the gifts of the season – the Giver;
- beyond the friends who gather – the Friend;
- beyond the lights that decorate – the Light of the World;
- beyond the loneliness – the Divine Lover;
- beyond our world’s pain and strife – the Prince of Peace!
- beyond the tinsel and trimmings – the Treasure!

The Cross

But over the cradle, even at our Lord’s Advent, was the shadow of the cross.

Jesus was born to die. He was born to become “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

The cross of wood is a symbol of the Cross eternal. The stupendous truth the Apostle Paul declared is that the cross was in the mind and heart of God even “before the foundation of the

world” (Eph. 1:4). God’s plan and provision for us in Christ, which includes Calvary, was made before our world was created. God’s plan of salvation was not an afterthought. The cross was not a divine expedient to meet an unforeseen emergency. But it was all conceived in the eternal heart of God when planet earth was merely a ‘blueprint’ in the divine mind. How inscrutable are the ways of God!

We are constrained to sing:

Oh, the love that drew salvation’s plan!
Oh, the grace that brought it down to man!
Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span
At Calvary!

The fact of divine anticipation is written on every page of human experience. God knew that man would be cold, so He put coal and gas and oil in the earth. He knew man would dread the dark, so He put electricity in the air. He knew man would be hungry, so He put seeds in our plants of food. He knew man would be thirsty, so He put water in the clouds. He knew man would be lonely, so He put family instinct in him. He knew man would sin, so He provided a Savior in that manger of Bethlehem.

The Crown

There is a wholeness about the life of Jesus. The tapestry of his life requires the major strands in order to perceive the overall design. His birth and life without his death is incomplete. His death is incomplete without his resurrection; his resurrection is incomplete without his return to glory. And the most golden strand of all is yet to be put in place when He comes again!

Let us this Christmas season see beyond the cradle to the cross, and beyond the cross to the crown. We must not leave Christ in the cattle shed of Christmas. He left that manger. He lived his mighty life. He gave his life on a cross. He rose from the dead. He is now our reigning Lord at the right hand of God.

A “manger faith” is not enough. We must have a “cross faith” that knows Christ as Savior. And we must have a “crown faith” that knows him as Sovereign and Lord of our life.

Christianity was never meant to be a manger faith. Jesus never referred to his birth in the manger. His emphasis was not on being born in the manger, but on being born in the hearts of men through his sacrifice on the cross, so that someday we may wear a crown with him.

In that stable of Bethlehem God had stepped onto the stage of human history. The Infinite became an infant. The God of creation whose power is flaunted by orbiting spheres unveiled his love in a Babe in a cradle of straw.

But the glorious news of God’s Word is that Jesus is coming again! This time it will not be as a baby in a manger but in majesty and might as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. When He comes again every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

An anthem of praise reminds us that the Lamb of God now wears the crown of glory:

Crown him with many crowns,
The Lamb upon his throne;
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns
All music but its own;
Awake, my soul, and sing
Of him who died for thee,
And hail him as thy matchless King
Through all eternity.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank and praise you this season for the birth of your Son in the cradle of Bethlehem, for his coming into our world to become our Savior.

Dear Jesus, words cannot express our heart's gratitude for your going to the cross, your dying for us that we might have life everlasting.

Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, we praise you that now you wear the crown of glory, and we wait in joyful anticipation until you will return and receive us unto yourself, and we will wear the crown of life.

Help each of us to know you as our Savior who came in the cradle and went to the cross to save us, and to know you also as our Sovereign who is coming again

In your matchless name we pray. Amen.