

# REJOICE

## Luke 1:39-55; Hebrews 10:5-10 // A Worship Service for Advent

*This worship gathering focuses on the story of Mary and the joy she found in carrying the Christ child. Here are some materials to get you started creating your own worship service.*

**MAIN THEME:** *What brings you joy?*

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## CHOOSING MUSIC // FOR SINGING

- ✪ **Joy Has Dawned Upon the World** [Key of F]  
Text and Music: Keith Getty and Stuart Townend  
© 2004 Thankyou Music
  
- ✪ **God With Us** [Key of D]  
Text and Music: Jason Ingram, Leslie Jordan  
© 2012 Open Hands Music (Admin. by Sony/ATV Sounds LLC)  
Sony/ATV Timber Publishing (Admin. by Sony/ATV Sounds LLC)  
Integrity's Praise! Music (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing)
  
- ✪ **Angels We Have Heard on High** [Key of F]  
Public Domain

## CREATING DRAMA // FOR HEARING

Sometimes we hear stories from scripture in new ways when we use our imagination to connect with God and others. Consider using the following guided prayer experience to take worshipers through the experience of Mary when she learned she would be carrying the Christ child. After this exercise, put worshipers into small groups to walk through the discussion questions.

### REFLECTING ON THE INCARNATION

*This prayer meditation can be used to guide worshipers through an empathetic experience with Mary as she learned that she would be carrying Christ in her womb.*

### INSTRUCTIONS

A leader should read the text aloud while challenging the worshippers to close their eyes and completely focus in on imagining the situation. After you are done reading, ask worshipers to divide into group of 3-4 people with those around them and process together the reflection questions.

### PRAYER

Just like in the story about Mary, an angel will visit you in this mediation. But before we begin, let's create the place where this encounter will happen. It can be wherever you choose, inside or outside, the mountains, the beach, the desert, or by the lake or rushing river. The actual location doesn't matter just as long as it feels safe and comfortable to you.

Take a few moments to create your setting; pay attention to the sounds and the temperature. Are you sitting, lying down, or standing? If you're outside, is there a breeze? Is the sky clear or cloudy? Are there windows? If so, are they open or closed? Is it daytime? Is it cold outside? Is there a fireplace? Is there a fire? Remember, whatever you decide, you should make it a place where you feel comfortable and safe.

Imagine you're now in the place you've created. You're enjoying your surroundings, resting and relaxing without a trouble or worry in the world. You feel at ease, peaceful, and calm.

Then an angel of the Lord appears to you. The angel speaks, "Greetings, favored one, the Lord is with you." Sit with these words, think about them. Are they easy for you to believe, to receive? How do they make you feel? (*Allow significant pause*) The angel continues, "God has decided to bless you. You and God will be on the same team, partners, working together. You're pregnant and will give birth." You're confused. "Pregnant? But how can this be?" you ask.

The angel replies, "You're pregnant with Jesus. Jesus lives within you through the Holy Spirit. You'll be the dwelling place for Jesus. God is asking you to give birth to Jesus in the ordinary events of your life, to make the presence of Jesus experience at school, work, home – wherever you are and whomever you're with at the time. You'll carry Jesus within you, just as a pregnant mother carries her baby within her, wherever she goes." How do the angel's words make you feel? Sit with your feelings. How do you respond to this request? Imagine yourself responding to the angel – what do you say?

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How do these words impact you: "Greetings, favored one, the Lord is with you?"
- What keeps you from fully embracing these words?
- If you could fully receive and embrace these words, how would they impact your view of yourself?
- What does it mean to be "pregnant with Jesus"?
- How would your awareness that you're pregnant with Jesus influence how you interact with others?

*Adapted from "Mary's Pregnant" in Jeannie Oestreicher, Larry Warner, Imaginative Prayer for Youth Ministry: A Guide (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, Inc., 2006), 76.*

Use the video "Rejoice" from Work of the People as a call to worship. [[www.theworkofthepeople.com](http://www.theworkofthepeople.com)]

## FINDING ART // FOR SEEING

What brings you joy? Set up creative stations around the room and use this question as a prompt for worshipers to create symbols of joy. You might have stations with aluminum foil, play-doh, pipe cleaners, paper and markers, or other materials of your choosing. Use these to add to the worship space.

## LIVING WORSHIP // FOR DOING

Encourage worshipers to get together with family and friends this week for joyful fellowship. As a different activity, invite them to watch the Christmas classic *It's a Wonderful Life* and reflect on the Gospel themes found in this movie. Specifically, ask them to contrast the ways culture defines joy with the way the presence of Christ defines joy.

## MAKING SPACE // FOR WORSHIPPING

The theme of this worship service centers around joy. Include symbols of joy in your worship space. You might use art depicting the joy Mary felt as she found out that she would give birth to the Savior of the world. You might use creative lighting with candles. Or, you might ask worshipers to submit photos of things that bring them joy by social media and use them worship space.

## WRITING POETRY// FOR PRAYING

Use this poem, Come, Lord Jesus, by Madeleine L'Engle as a way of praying together. Have a leader pray the parts in italics and the people pray the parts in bold.

### **Come, Lord Jesus!**

*Do I dare cry: Lord Jesus, quickly come!  
Flash the lightning in the air,  
Crash the thunder on my home!  
Should I speak this awful prayer?  
Come, Lord Jesus, help me dare.*

### **Come, Lord Jesus! You I call!**

*To come, come soon, are not the child  
Who lay once in the manger stall,  
Are not the infant meek and mild.  
You come in judgment on our fall.  
Help me to know on whom I call.*

### **Come, Lord Jesus! Come this night!**

*With your judgment and your power,  
For the earth is dark with blight  
And in sin we run and cower  
Before the splendid raging sight  
Of the breaking of the night.*

### **Come, my Lord! Our darkness end!**

*Break the bonds of time and space.  
All the powers of evil rend  
By the radiance of your face.  
The laughing stars with joy attend.  
Come, Lord Jesus, be my end!*

# SAMPLE WORSHIP SERVICE

*Rejoice // Luke 1:39-55; Hebrews 10:5-10 // A Worship Service for Advent*

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Use the song below to gather. Between the song and the Call to Worship, explain the significance of the Advent wreath and its role in worship this month.

Then, light the fourth candle of the wreath.

*Depending on when and if your group gathers again before Christmas, you may consider lighting the final candle during or at the end of this worship gathering.*

## GATHERING SONG

*Wait for the Lord*

## CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Here I am, Lord!

**All: I have come to do your will.**  
(Hebrews 10:8-10, alt.)

*Wait for the Lord (reprise)*

## SONGS OF JOY

*Joy Has Dawned Upon the World*  
*Angels We Have Heard on High*

## PRAYER OF PRAISE

**All: Come, Lord Jesus!**

One: Do I dare cry: Lord Jesus, quickly come!  
Flash the lightning in the air,  
Crash the thunder on my home!  
Should I speak this awful prayer?  
Come, Lord Jesus, help me dare.

**All: Come, Lord Jesus! You I call!**

One: To come, come soon, are not the child  
Who lay once in the manger stall,  
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You come in judgment on our fall.  
Help me to know on whom I call.

**All: Come, Lord Jesus! Come this night!**

One: With your judgment and your power,  
For the earth is dark with blight  
And in sin we run and cower  
Before the splendid raging sight  
Of the breaking of the night.

**All: Come, my Lord! Our darkness end!**

One: Break the bonds of time and space.  
All the powers of evil rend  
By the radiance of your face.  
The laughing stars with joy attend.  
Come, Lord Jesus, be my end!

*Madeline L'Engle*

## SONG OF FAITH

*By Faith*

## SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 1:39-55

## PRAYER MEDITATION

*What brings you joy?* Set up creative stations around the room and use this question as a prompt for worshipers to create symbols of joy. You might have stations with aluminum foil, play-doh, pipe cleaners, paper and markers, or other materials of your choosing. Use these to add to the worship space.

*Use a refrain of a song already sung to bring worshipers back together.*

## MESSAGE

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Use the guided prayer experience in our module to guide worshipers through an empathetic prayer that connects to the joy Mary must have felt when she learned she would carry the Christ child.

## SONG OF JOY

*Joy Has Dawned Upon the World (final stanza)*

## BENEDICTION

One: May the God of hope fill us with all joy  
and peace in believing through the power  
of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

**All: Amen.**