

Crib Service: Light in the dark

These are the words we used for the Christmas Eve Crib Service: "Light in the dark" You are welcome to use them or adapt them.

Welcome and opening prayer

Lighting of the Advent wreath

Leader: We will begin our retelling of the Christmas story by singing "O Little Town of Bethlehem".

Carol: O Little Town of Bethlehem

Leader: In the beginning the world was good. There was light and love, trees and flowers, animals and birds ... If you have been given something to wave, stand up and wave it now. *(Children stand up in their places, or on pews, and wave flames, hearts, stars, trees, plants, animals.)* Thanks everyone... if you could sit down again now please.

There were all these things... and there were people... and the world was very good *(People figures make their way to the front)*

But then things went wrong.

The people turned away from God. They began to do things that hurt each other and hurt God... *(People figures are taken to the back. The people stood with their backs to the crib scene, facing the west door)* It seemed as if the world had become a cold dark place. *(Lights and heaters were turned off except for the light in the chancel above the altar. (There was still candlelight on the windowsills but the church was quite dark)* The people felt sad and lonely.

But God did not turn away from the people...

He sent his prophets to tell the people that He was still with them...

And then he sent his Son, Jesus to be born as a baby in Bethlehem.

(Baby Jesus, wrapped in gold organza and netting, is carried down from the altar to the west door. As He passes lights and heaters are put back on. The music of Make Way is played)

It was as if light and warmth and love had come back into the world...

We are now going to sing the carol: It was on a starry night. If you have a card for one of the crib figures, will you make your way to the back now please.

Carol: It was on a starry night

Leader: The baby was born to the Mother Mary. *(Mary, Joseph, baby and donkey are taken to the crib. In our version they were accompanied by the gold organza wrapped baby Jesus.)* She and her husband Joseph were the first to know that God had sent us his son Jesus. Mary put the baby in the manger and she remembered what the angel had said.

Voice 1: Jesus's kingdom will never end...

Leader: That night there were shepherds in the dark fields above Bethlehem, watching over their sheep. A bright light shone around them and then a voice cried out to them:

Voice 1: I bring you good news that will be for all people. Today in Bethlehem a Saviour has been born unto you, he is Christ the Lord.

Leader: So the shepherds made their way to Bethlehem, where they found the baby Jesus, the Son of God. They knelt down and worshipped him. *(Shepherds and angel are taken to the crib)*

We are now going to sing the carol "See him lying in a bed of straw"

Carol: See him lying in a bed of straw

Leader: In a far off country, the wise men, the magi looked at the skies. They saw the brilliant shining star and they knew what it meant. They travelled for many days until they reached the city of Jerusalem, where they asked the question:

Voice 2: Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east and have come to worship him.

Leader: When they found Jesus, they too knelt down and worshipped him. They gave him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh. *(Wise men to the crib)*

But what about the people who had turned away from God?

Jesus is their Lord too. God sent Jesus so that everyone might have the chance to turn back to God, to be forgiven and to know God's love and warmth and light. *(People turn around and carry figures to the crib)*

We are now going to ask all the children to come forward bringing their symbols of light, love and all creation to place around the crib.

Leader: We will now sing "Away in a manger". The children will sing the first verse, then we will all sing the second and third verses.

Carol: Away in a manger

(Children return to seats)

Short prayers including Lord's prayer

Leader: We will finish by singing "O Come all ye faithful". There will be a collection during this carol.

Carol: O come all ye faithful

Blessing and dismissal

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