

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel A Family Liturgy for Christmas

Background Images:

The Incarnation began a new world: “old things have passed away; behold all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:18). “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself” (2 Cor. 5:19). In the Incarnation we learn that “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it (Jn. 1:4,5).

Themes of newness and light should always pervade our Christmas celebrations. The northern hemisphere has an especially nice background—darkest winter—to emphasize light overcoming darkness. Sometimes we decorate our homes with lights as a symbol of turning back the night, of the brightness scattering the darkness. Just when the sun is farthest from the earth, the Light of lights moves us toward spring.

In a parallel way, we emphasize newness by pressing forward toward a restored Eden. To plant a tree full of “fruit” in our living rooms in the middle of winter is another way we picture turning back the death of winter. The tree itself is not some compromised pagan carry over. The symbol is originally biblical; trees of life and knowledge are central to our Edenic origins. Sure pagans slunk off with Edenic symbols and worshiped the creature rather than the Creator, but that is their sin, not ours. The Bible begins and ends with a tree, and the reversal of the Fall gets its strength from the Incarnation: “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

This newness of life is not only pictured in fruitful trees; the whole creation has been made new. Christmas is the beginning of the New Heavens and Earth, and this naturally comes to expression in our gift giving—new clothes, new tools, new games, new books—a new world. And if the Lord blesses and your tree is gloriously surrounded with boxes on top of boxes of this new order of stuff, you can stoop down level with all those boxes and see that the boxes resemble a city skyline, a new city, “the great city, the holy Jerusalem”—“the foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with all kinds of precious stones” (Rev. 21:19) where the nations “bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it” (Rev. 21:26). And in the middle of this city is “the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Rev. 22:2)—your Christmas tree.

Most Christian treatments of Christmas wallow in complaining about materialism and commercialism. Those concerns obviously have their place. But we must learn to delight in the life of God. If you have a healthy family, focus on the positive vision—light and life and newness. This is a time when the world turned from a desert drought to the abundance of Christ.

The Liturgy:

The family liturgy was motivated by a desire to make the Christmas season bigger in the mind of our family. One or two days just isn’t enough to celebrate something as momentous as the Incarnation. This desire also finds its expression in the traditional Christmas advent calendar.

This liturgy changes every year, and I’m sure many can surpass its bigness. But it is just a start and shouldn’t stand alone. The nightly liturgies start on December 16th and run through Christmas day. They aim to sketch the covenantal background leading up to the appearance of Christ, all in line with the themes expressed in that classic hymn, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.” Try to distribute the readings among the older children as much as possible; we

often reserve the one-line “Spoken Response” for a younger child (even nonreaders can memorize the repeated line quickly).

Past versions of this liturgy have been more intellect centered than this version. The words are the same, but this version seeks to play more off the “exiled in the desert” textures and tastes of the pre-Incarnation world, especially as captured in the recurring line of the main hymn: “O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.”

We’re made to know with our whole bodies, not just our minds. In prior years, we merely read the liturgy with empty wine glasses and candles in front of each family member to signify the exile experience, darkness in the desert. This version seeks to expand that, and it invokes imagery from Ezekiel, especially images of the clattering bones (wooden dowels) of Ezekiel 37 and the textures of sand, flour, vinegar, along with a tease of chocolate to highlight each night’s desert longing. This desert experience, of course, should culminate in a feast on Christmas day, when the sand and vinegar are replaced by tokens of delicacies and the best wine or champagne.

Supplies:

- Bones: each night, the bones of Ezekiel 37 are used to pound out the slow, melancholy rhythm behind “O Come, O Come.” For bones, we use foot-long, one inch dowels.

- Sand mixed with flour: Exile in the desert made up key moments of Israel’s experience in looking toward the Messiah: “For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody” (Is. 51:3). Drawing on a hint from the Passover, where bitter herbs were part of the celebration, the reasonable use and “scandal” of tasting sand and flour will stick out in childrens’ memories. Depending upon the size of your family, have a small bowl (or several) of clean sand mixed with flour reachable by all participants. Participants can just lick a finger and touch it to the mixture then to their tongues for that special “desert bitterness” effect.

- Vinegar: a similar setup (bowls of vinegar) works for the vinegar: “The fathers have eaten sour grapes, And the children’s teeth are set on edge?” (Ezek. 18:2).

In all of this, don’t hinder laughter or pulled faces. Neither the sand-flour nor the vinegar is supposed to taste good. They are tokens of exile.

- Tiny chocolates: these should be very small, teasingly small (single chips or even mini chips). They are invoked at the very end to point to the coming glory of the Incarnation. Christmas day itself should have more serious chocolate at work.

- Wine glasses: as in previous years, empty wine glasses should sit waiting to be filled on Christmas day

- Candles: ten candles (perhaps in a nice display) play off the light theme and increasingly brighten the path toward Christmas day, when all will be lit.

- Christmas day supplies:

- real wine or champagne
- special treats (small baked goods or elegant chocolates)
- cymbals (or hands) to replace the wooden “bones”

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
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The Ninth Day Before Christmas (Dec. 16): The view from Adam's time

Supplies: "bone" dowels, empty wine glasses, sand-flour mix, vinegar, and tiny chocolates sit within reach of each person. The first candle is lit.

1. *Prayer:* Glorious Father, we thank You for Your mercy to us. You gave us so many good things in Adam, yet we rebelled, unfaithful and ungrateful. Hear our prayers through Christ, Your holy Son who turned back our rebellion in Adam.

2. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* O Come, Thou rod of Jesse, free Thine own from Satan's tyranny.

3. *Opening Thought:* God created the world and all the beautiful things that make it up—juicy oranges, sleek lions, bumpy whales, crisp grasses, human elbows and eyebrows. Everything was peaceful, and there were no tears. God set Adam and Eve in the midst of all this blessing and beauty and allowed them to care for it. God and man were friends at peace. Yet even with all this blessing, through our Father Adam, we rebelled and sought arrogantly to be God, not just the friend of God. We loved the lying word of Satan instead of the truth of God. Because of this rebellion, we broke man's friendly and peaceful bond with God. How can the bond between man and God be repaired?

4. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* O Come, Thou rod of Jesse, free Thine own from Satan's tyranny.

5. *Spoken Response:* God was good to us, and we rebelled. How can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

6. *Scripture Reading:* The Lord God planted a garden eastward of Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God made every tree grow that is pleasant to the sight and good for food (Gen. 2:8).

7. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* From depths of hell Thy people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.

8. *Spoken Response:* God was good to us, yet we rebelled. How can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

9. *Scripture Reading:* Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature that was its name (Gen. 2:19).

10. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

11. *Spoken Response:* God was good to us, yet we rebelled. How can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

12. *Scripture Reading:* Then the man said, ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.’ And the Lord God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ The woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate’ (Gen. 3:12).

13. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* O Come, Thou rod of Jesse, free Thine own from Satan’s tyranny.

14. *Spoken Response:* God was good to us, yet we rebelled. How can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

15. *Scripture Reading:* So the Lord God said to the serpent: ‘Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; . . . And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel (Gen. 3:14,15).

16. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* From depths of hell Thy people save, and give them vict’ry o’er the grave.

17. *Spoken Response:* God was good to us, yet we rebelled. How can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

18. *Closing Plea:* Lord we are sinful and have no righteousness in ourselves. We long for Your perfect righteousness. Send forth a Savior to clothe us in righteousness and crush Your enemies. We long to have You as our God, and we long to be Your people, but our sin has cut us off. (*Eat tiny chocolate.*)

19. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* O Come, Thou rod of Jesse, free Thine own from Satan’s tyranny. From depths of hell Thy people save, and give them vict’ry o’er the grave. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

20. *Spoken Response:* Our wine glasses remain empty as we long for a savior. (*Everyone clinks empty wine glasses together.*)

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The Eighth Day Before Christmas (Dec. 17): The view from Noah's time

Supplies: "bone" dowels, empty wine glasses, sand-flour mix, vinegar, and tiny chocolates sit within reach of each person. The first two candles of ten have been lit.

1. *Prayer:* Lord, we bow before you in gratitude. We thank you that you care for your people and preserve them through many trials. We thank you for the sun and moon and lamps that light our lives. We thank you for the seasons, winter, summer, seedtime and harvest.

2. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* O Come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer Our spirits by Thine advent here.

3. *Opening Thought:* God drove Adam and Eve from His garden of peace and friendship because of their sin. As God had promised, the enemies of God were hostile to the faithful descendants of Eve. At this time, great wickedness prevailed on the face of the earth, and God was grieved that he had made all these people. The stench of their sin clouded the earth. So the Lord decided that he would destroy these people with a horrible flood. But God was pleased with a faithful man, named Noah, and he preserved him and his family through the flood. The rains poured down and shot up from the earth, drowning the enemies of God. When the flood waters receded, God gave Noah and his family the same command he gave Adam: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth." But man continued to sin. Would God again punish sin by a flood? Or would he preserve the world for a savior to come and bring forgiveness?

4. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* O drive away the shades of night and pierce the clouds and bring us light.

5. *Spoken Response:* Sin deserves the wrath and curse of God, but God promised Noah He would preserve the world. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

6. *Scripture Reading:* "The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart" (Gen. 6:8).

7. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

8. *Spoken Response:* Sin deserves the wrath and curse of God, but God promised Noah He would preserve the world. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

9. *Scripture Reading:* "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. . . . And God said to Noah, 'the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.' . . . But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your

wife, and your sons' wives with you. And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you” (Gen. 6:8,13,18-19).

10. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: O come, Thou Day-spring come and cheer Our spirits by Thine advent here.

11. *Spoken Response*: Sin deserves the wrath and curse of God, but God promised Noah He would preserve the world. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

12. *Scripture Reading*: “And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. . . . And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days. Then God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals there were with him in the ark. And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided” (Gen. 7:18,24; 8:1).

13. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: O drive away the shades of night and pierce the clouds and bring us light.

14. *Spoken Response*: Sin deserves the wrath and curse of God, but God promised Noah He would preserve the world. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

15. *Scripture Reading*: “The Lord said in His heart, ‘I will never again curse the ground for man’s sake, although the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth. . . . While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and winter and summer, and day and night, shall not cease. . . . The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature (Gen. 8:21,22; 9:16).

16. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

17. *Spoken Response*: Sin deserves the wrath and curse of God, but God promised Noah He would preserve the world. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

18. *Closing Plea*: Lord we are sinful and have no righteousness in ourselves. Through the rainbow, you have promised to preserve the world and not punish us with a flood again. We need your forgiveness, and by your promise to preserve the seasons, you have protected the path for a savior to come to bring us forgiveness not wrath. (*Eat tiny chocolate.*)

19. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: O come, Thou Day-spring, come and cheer Our spirits by Thine advent here; O drive away the shades of night and pierce the clouds and bring us light. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.

20. *Spoken Response*: Our wine glasses remain empty as we long for the birth of a savior. (*Everyone clinks empty wine glasses together.*)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
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The Seventh Day Before Christmas (Dec. 18): The view from Abraham's time

Supplies: "bone" dowels, empty wine glasses, sand-flour mix, vinegar, and tiny chocolates sit within reach of each person. The first three candles of ten have been lit.

1. *Prayer:* Father, we thank you that you make and keep such wonderful promises to your people. We rest in your power and strength. Nothing can turn your hand away from your desires. And we rejoice that you have counted us as part of your people. We pray that you will keep us and our children faithful for our whole lives, and then we can stand before your wonderful holiness.

2. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* O come, Thou hope of Abraham, and pour Thine blessings o'er the earth;

3. *Opening Thought:* After the great flood, Noah's descendents also split into the friends and enemies of God, just as God had promised Adam. But now with the rainbow promise of protection, God moved to bring forgiveness to a sinful people. To do this, God called one of Noah's great, great grandchildren, Abraham. And to Abraham, God preached His glorious gospel, which is: "In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Through the line of Abraham, God would bring salvation to all nations, and God swore an oath on His own name, since there is no God above Him. He promised Abraham a great people and a great land. Even more, the Lord promised a renewed closeness between God and man, saying "I will be your God, and you will be My people." But God is still holy and just. He cannot leave sin unpunished. How can He be man's friend again while we are still sinners?

4. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* Count us Thine own, be God to us; And be the Lord our Righteousness.

5. *Spoken Response:* God promised to bless the world through Abraham's child, but we are still sinners. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

6. *Scripture Reading:* "Now the Lord said to Abram: 'Get out of our country. . . . I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed'" (Gen. 12:1-3).

7. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

8. *Spoken Response:* God promised to bless the world through Abraham's child, but we are still sinners. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

9. *Scripture Reading:* "Then he brought [Abraham] outside and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them. . . . So shall your descendants be.' And he,

[Abraham], believed in the Lord and He accounted it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15: 5-6).

10. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: O come, Thou hope of Abraham, and pour Thine blessings o’er the earth;

11. *Spoken Response*: God promised to bless the world through Abraham’s child, but we are still sinners. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

12. *Scripture Reading*: “When Abraham was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to [him] and said to him, ‘I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless. And I will make a covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly. . . . I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you” (Gen. 17: 12,6).

13. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: Count us Thine own, be God to us; And be the Lord our Righteousness.

14. *Spoken Response*: God promised to bless the world through Abraham’s child, but we are still sinners. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

15. *Scripture Reading*: “‘By Myself I have sworn,’ says the Lord. ‘because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son, in blessing I will bless you, and in multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice” (Gen. 8:21,22; 9:16).

16. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

17. *Spoken Response*: God promised to bless the world through Abraham’s child, but we are still sinners. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

18. *Closing Plea*: Lord, we thank you for your glorious promises to Abraham and his descendants. You have granted him all the nations and all the world. We need your forgiveness, and by your promise to bring salvation to the nations, we long for a savior to come to bring us forgiveness not wrath. (*Eat tiny chocolate.*)

19. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: O come, Thou hope of Abraham, and pour Thine blessings o’er the earth; Count us Thine own, be God to us; And be the Lord our Righteousness. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

20. *Spoken Response*: Our wine glasses remain empty as we long for the birth of a savior. (*Everyone clinks empty wine glasses together.*)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
A Family Liturgy for Christmas

The Sixth Day Before Christmas (Dec. 19): The view from Moses' time

Supplies: "bone" dowels, empty wine glasses, sand-flour mix, vinegar, and tiny chocolates sit within reach of each person. The first four candles of ten have been lit.

1. *Prayer:* Almighty Lord, Your commandments are like honey to our lips. Your law is perfect and holy. Open our eyes so that we may see wonderful things in Your law. We love your law and hope in Your commandments. Make it our meditation all the day so that our eyes may be opened to Your wisdom.

2. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height;

3. *Opening Thought:* After Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob passed away, their children multiplied in Egypt. Out of fear, the Egyptians made these Israelites slaves, so that they could not prosper. In seeing this terrible slavery, God remembered His promises to Abraham. So He called Moses as His servant to lead Israel out of Egyptian bondage. And with great miracles, God freed His people from their slavery. He sent plagues on Egypt and opened the Red Sea. When His people were finally free, God renewed Abraham's covenant with them and wrote out His holy commandments so all could hear them. God's commands were a wonderful gift of holiness and wisdom. He also more clearly taught the Israelites that *sin requires death and bloodshed*. He showed them this by requiring them to sacrifice animals for sin in place of their own bodies. Though animal sacrifices are a good picture of forgiveness, the animals haven't sinned; the people have. So how can humans find real forgiveness?

4. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* In ancient times didst give the law, in cloud and majesty and awe.

5. *Spoken Response:* God's law is perfect, and sin requires death. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

6. *Scripture Reading:* "And God spoke to Moses and said to him, 'I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. . . . And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. Therefore say to the children of Israel, "I am the Lord; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. . . . And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob"' (Exod. 6:3,5-6).

7. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

8. *Spoken Response:* God's law is perfect, and sin requires death. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

9. *Scripture Reading:* "Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and spoke, saying: 'I will sing to the Lord, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea! The Lord is my strength and my song, and He has become my salvation; . . . The Lord is

a man of war; . . . Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea. . . . The Lord shall reign forever and ever” (Exod. 15: 1,4,18).

10. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height;

11. *Spoken Response:* God's law is perfect, and sin requires death. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

12. *Scripture Reading:* “And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles wings and brought you to Myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people, for all the earth is Mine. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”” (Exod. 19:3-6)

13. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* In ancient times didst give the law, in cloud and majesty and awe.

14. *Spoken Response:* God's law is perfect, and sin requires death. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

15. *Scripture Reading:* “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, ‘When any one of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering of the livestock—of the herd and of the flock. If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; . . . Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. He shall kill the bull before the Lord; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around the altar” (Lev. 1:2,-5).

16. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

17. *Spoken Response:* God's law is perfect, and sin requires death. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

18. *Closing Plea:* Lord, we thank you for keeping your promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You remembered Your people when they were slaves in Egypt, and you redeemed us from oppression. You have graciously granted us Your law, and it is beautiful. But it condemns us shows us that we are wicked and far from You. The blood of bulls and goats cannot truly take away our sin. We long for Your forgiveness. Please send us a Savior and deliver us from our sins. (*Eat tiny chocolate.*)

19. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height; In ancient times didst give the law, in cloud and majesty and awe. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

20. *Spoken Response:* Our wine glasses remain empty as we long for the birth of a savior. (*Everyone clinks empty wine glasses together.*)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
A Family Liturgy for Christmas

The Fifth Day Before Christmas (Dec. 20): The view from David's time

Supplies: "bone" dowels, empty wine glasses, sand-flour mix, vinegar, and tiny chocolates sit within reach of each person. The first five candles of ten have been lit.

1. *Prayer:* Almighty Lord, You have promised Your people peace, and David tasted that peace. We have a rest he did not know, and yet we still long for that perfect rest. Open our eyes to the meditations in Your Psalms and teach us to hope in Your mighty strength alone for our future. Open our eyes to Your great lovingkindness.

2. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* O come, Thou Key of David, come and open wide our heav'nly home.

3. *Opening Thought:* God had promised Abraham a land and a people. He also promised Abraham that kings would come from him. In keeping these promises, God started by redeeming Israel out of slavery in Egypt and blessed them with His law. After many trials in the wilderness, the people finally started inhabiting the promised land. But the land wasn't empty. Under God's direction, Israel needed to remove many wicked people from the promised land. After many years of battles and rulers, Israel finally found peace in her land under the rule of King David. God told David that something more wonderful would follow after him. The Lord would establish David's throne and descendants *forever*. From David would come more kings and an eternal kingdom. David's son would build a temple for the Lord. And one king from David would have an eternal kingdom. How could a son of David live forever? God also promised that His mercy would never leave David's descendants. But how could God be just and punish sin and yet be merciful to sinners?

4. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* Where all Thy saints with Thee shall dwell, O come, O come, Emmanuel!

5. *Spoken Response:* We are sinners, yet God has promised to be merciful. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

6. *Scripture Reading:* "Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, . . . to be ruler over My people, over Israel. And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name. . . . I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more" (II Sam. 7:8ff.).

7. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

8. *Spoken Response:* We are sinners, yet God has promised to be merciful. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

9. *Scripture Reading:* [To David] "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he

shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men. . . . But My mercy shall not depart from him” (II Sam. 7:12-15).

10. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: O come, Thou Key of David, come and open wide our heav’nly home.

11. *Spoken Response*: We are sinners, yet God has promised to be merciful. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

12. *Scripture Reading*: “Then King David went in and sat before the Lord; and he said, ‘Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house that You have brought me this far? . . . And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself, . . . whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt. For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, Lord, have become their God” (II Sam. 7:18,23,24).

13. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: Where all Thy saints with Thee shall dwell, O come, O come, Emmanuel!

14. *Spoken Response*: We are sinners, yet God has promised to be merciful. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

15. *Scripture Reading*: [David sang:] “Israel came into Egypt, . . . and He increased His people greatly. . . . He sent Moses His servant. . . . Egypt was glad when they departed. . . . He remembered His holy promise and Abraham His servant. He brought out His people with joy. . . . He gave them the lands of the Gentiles, and they inherited the labor of the nations, that they might observe His statutes and keep His laws” (Ps. 105:23,26, 42ff.; cf. I Chron. 16:7ff.).

16. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

17. *Spoken Response*: We are sinners, yet God has promised to be merciful. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

18. *Closing Plea*: Lord, we rejoice that you kept Your promises to Abraham during the times of Moses and David. We glorify You in Your promise to give David a descendant who would have an eternal kingdom. But David died and his sons were not always faithful. The kingdom fell, and Your people lusted after other gods. We long for a faithful son of David who can live forever and bring us Your mercy. (*Eat tiny chocolate.*)

19. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: O come, Thou Key of David, come and open wide our heav’nly home. Where all Thy saints with Thee shall dwell, O come, O come, Emmanuel! Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

20. *Spoken Response*: Our wine glasses remain empty as we long for the birth of a savior. (*Everyone clinks empty wine glasses together.*)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
A Family Liturgy for Christmas

The Fourth Day Before Christmas (Dec. 21): The view from the Psalms [David's time]

Supplies: "bone" dowels, empty wine glasses, sand-flour mix, vinegar, and tiny chocolates sit within reach of each person. The first six candles of ten have been lit.

1. *Prayer:* Merciful Father, we sing Your praises and rejoice in Your tender mercies. We remember Your ancient promises to Your people and love to see them come true. We long to see all nations turn to You and to see the Church faithful and strong and one. Please perfect our prayers and our songs before Your throne.

2. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* O come, Thou Key of David, come and open wide our heav'nly home.

3. *Opening Thought:* King David not only subdued God's enemies and brought peace to Israel, he also wrote poetry and songs—the Psalms. The Psalms rehearse all of God's work and promises. They remember Abraham and Moses, victory and defeat, mercy and repentance. Even more, they give us a better hint to that great Old Testament mystery: how can God promise both punishment and forgiveness of sin? It also gives us more hints as to how David could have an eternal throne. Through David and others, the Psalms tell us of a single person to come who will be a mighty king who conquers his enemies, brings peace to the world, and dies a terrible death. But, most interestingly, he will also be a priest; and sin and death won't be able to hold him in the grave. Here somehow is one in whom both justice and mercy are combined. This is a great mystery. Can he also bring forgiveness to God's people?

4. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* Where all Thy saints with Thee shall dwell, O come, O come, Emmanuel!

5. *Spoken Response:* A son of David will come and bring punishment and mercy to the world. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

6. *Scripture Reading:* "Why do the nations rage and the people plot a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed saying, 'Let us break their bonds in pieces'. . . . He who sits in heaven shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. . . . Yet I have set My king on My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree the Lord has said to Me, 'You are My son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron; . . . Now therefore, be wise O kings; Be instructed you judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry" (Psalm 2:1-4,6-11).

7. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

8. *Spoken Response:* A son of David will come and bring punishment and mercy to the world. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

9. *Scripture Reading:* "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!

Your people shall be volunteers in the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning. . . The Lord has sworn and will not relent, You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (Psalm 110:1-4).

10. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* O come, Thou Key of David, come and open wide our heav’nly home.

11. *Spoken Response:* A son of David will come and bring punishment and mercy to the world. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

12. *Scripture Reading:* “Give the king Your judgments, O God. And Your righteousness to the king’s son. He will judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with justice. . . . In his days the righteous shall flourish, and abundance of peace, until the moon is no more. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him, and His enemies shall lick the dust. . . . All nations shall serve Him. . . . All nations shall call Him blessed” (Psalm 72).

13. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* Where all Thy saints with Thee shall dwell, O come, O come, Emmanuel!

14. *Spoken Response:* A son of David will come and bring punishment and mercy to the world. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

15. *Scripture Reading:* “I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; . . . For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all my bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots. . . . My praise shall be of You in the great assembly; . . . The poor shall eat and be satisfied; Those who seek Him will praise the Lord. . . . All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You.” (Psalm 22:14ff.). “For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will you allow Your Holy One to see corruption” (Ps. 16:10).

16. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

17. *Spoken Response:* A son of David will come and bring punishment and mercy to the world. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

18. *Closing Plea:* Lord, You show us wondrous promises in Your Psalms. You promised Your people a mighty king and priest. He brings peace to the nations from sea to sea and the ends of the earth. He is the seed of Abraham in whom all the nations of the world will be blessed. Let us be counted in His mercy and not His wrath, for we have no righteousness in ourselves. (*Eat tiny chocolate.*)

19. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* O come, Thou Key of David, come and open wide our heav’nly home. Where all Thy saints with Thee shall dwell, O come, O come, Emmanuel! Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

20. *Spoken Response:* Our wine glasses remain empty as we long for the birth of a savior. (*Everyone clinks empty wine glasses together.*)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
A Family Liturgy for Christmas

The Third Day Before Christmas (Dec. 22): The view from the Prophets

Supplies: "bone" dowels, empty wine glasses, sand-flour mix, vinegar, and tiny chocolates sit within reach of each person. The first seven candles of ten have been lit.

1. *Prayer:* Almighty Lord, Your people cry out to You for forgiveness and mercy. Their enemies surround them and threaten to destroy them. Your word is full of precious promises. Please don't grant us the justice we deserve, or we would all die for our sin. Please grant us mercy and forgiveness so we may praise Your name.

2. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,

3. *Opening Thought:* God had told David of the great eternal kingdom to come. Through David, God would bless all the families of the earth, just as God had promised Abraham. But the people of Israel, like Adam, rebelled against all this grace and goodness. Israel turned against God in ugly ingratitude. They turned to other gods and despised the beautiful wisdom of God's commandments. They invited God's wrath upon themselves, and they got it. God used other nations to drag Israel from her promised home and to make her a slave to pagan nations. Those who despise God, love slavery and death. David's kingdom fell. His son's stopped ruling from the throne, and David's descendants became slaves for many, many years. The prophets constantly warned the rebellious people of their unfaithfulness, and finally after many years in exile, the people started yearning for forgiveness. They mourned in exile and longed to be close to God again. They confessed their sin and called out for God's mercy. But God can't just forget sin. Sin requires death. How can even repentant sinners find true forgiveness?

4. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.

5. *Spoken Response:* We hate our sin and love God's mercy. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

6. *Scripture Reading:* "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Lord has spoken; 'I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Me; The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib; But Israel does not know; My people do not consider. Alas, a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, Children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, They have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, They have turned backward" (Is. 1:2-4).

7. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

8. *Spoken Response:* We hate our sin and love God's mercy. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

9. *Scripture Reading:* "All the nations shall see My judgment which I have executed, and My hand which I have laid on them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day

forward. The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them” (Ezek. 39:21ff.).

10. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,

11. *Spoken Response:* We hate our sin and love God’s mercy. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

12. *Scripture Reading:* “How lonely sits the city that was full of people. How like a widow is she, who was great among the nations! the princess among the provinces has become a slave! She weeps bitterly in the night, her tears are on her cheeks. . . . Judah has gone into captivity, under affliction and hard servitude. She dwells among the nations, she finds no rest. . . . Our fathers sinned and are no more, but we bear their iniquities. Servants rule over us; there is none to deliver us from their hand. . . . The joy of our heart has ceased; our dance has turned into mourning. The crown has fallen from our head. Woe to us, for we have sinned. . . . You, O Lord, remain forever; Why do you forget us forever, and forsake us for so long a time. Turn us back to You, O Lord, and we will be restored. Renew our days as of old, unless You have utterly rejected us” (Lam. 1:1-3; 5:7,8,15,16,19ff.)

13. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.

14. *Spoken Response:* We hate our sin and love God’s mercy. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

15. *Scripture Reading:* [Daniel prayed] “O Lord, to us belongs shame of face. . . because we have sinned against You. To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. . . . Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, . . . therefore the curse and the oath written in the law of Moses . . . have been poured out on us. . . . We do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. O Lord hear! O Lord forgive!” (Dan. 9:8ff.).

16. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

17. *Spoken Response:* We hate our sin and love God’s mercy. So how can we find forgiveness? (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

18. *Closing Plea:* Lord, we acknowledge our sin, though You bless us with so much. Our sin sometimes blinds us to Your promises, though You are ever faithful. What happened to the promises of David? Where is his eternal throne? Why have His descendants rebelled against You? Remember Your promises to Abraham, Moses, and David. Your people plea for mercy. Grant us hearts of flesh. Be just and merciful. (*Eat tiny chocolate.*)

19. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

20. *Spoken Response:* Our wine glasses remain empty as we long for the birth of a savior. (*Everyone clinks empty wine glasses together.*)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
A Family Liturgy for Christmas

The Second Day Before Christmas (Dec. 23): More of the view from the Prophets

Supplies: “bone” dowels, empty wine glasses, sand-flour mix, vinegar, and tiny chocolates sit within reach of each person. The first eight candles of ten have been lit.

1. *Prayer:* Heavenly Father, we bow before Your holiness. We thank You for Your justice and mercy. We would be lost on our own. We would still be enslaved to our sin. But You have kept Your promises and both punished and forgiven sin. Please sanctify us and our children for a thousand generations. Let us each rejoice to see our grandchildren following You faithfully.

2. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,

3. *Opening Thought:* Years passed as the people suffered in slavery in Babylon. Finally, God did free them from Babylon and permitted them to return to Israel. They even rebuilt the temple during difficult times. Though many remained faithful, many others grew weak in faith and despaired. They still longed for the promises that seemed so far off. Yet God had given them even more reason for hope. The prophets had not only preached against their sin, they had told them more about the coming savior, the Son of David. They better explained the great mystery as to how God could be just *and* merciful. *He could do both by giving us a sinless substitute.* This substitute, like Adam, would stand in our place and be our representative. But where Adam failed, Messiah would be faithful. Messiah would take our just penalty and grant us His perfect righteousness. Salvation will come to earth. This is the great gift of Christmas. This is why we sing and feast and cheer! Justice and forgiveness would finally come to bless all the nations of the earth!

4. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.

5. *Spoken Response:* So how can we find forgiveness? God will give us His Son to bear our sins and give us righteousness. (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

6. *Scripture Reading:* “For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, . . . from that time forward, even forever” (Is. 9:6,7).

7. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”):* Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

8. *Spoken Response:* So how can we find forgiveness? God will give us His Son to bear our sins and give us righteousness. (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

9. *Scripture Reading:* “I will take the children of Israel from among the nations. . . . Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God. David My servant shall be king over them, . . . They shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes and do them. They shall dwell in the land that I have given to

Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children and their children's children forever; and My servant David shall be their prince forever" (Ezek. 37:23-25).

10. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones")*: O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,

11. *Spoken Response*: So how can we find forgiveness? God will give us His Son to bear our sins and give us righteousness. (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

12. *Scripture Reading*: "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; . . . and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. . . . For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. . . . My righteous servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities. . . . Break forth into singing, and cry aloud. . . . For you shall expand to the right and to the left, and your descendants shall inherit the nations" (Is. 53:5,6,11; 54:1,3)

13. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones")*: That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear.

14. *Spoken Response*: So how can we find forgiveness? God will give us His Son to bear our sins and give us righteousness. (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

15. *Scripture Reading*: "Behold the days are coming, says, the Lord, when I will make a new covenant . . . I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, say the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jer. 31:31,33,34).

16. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones")*: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

17. *Spoken Response*: So how can we find forgiveness? God will give us His Son to bear our sins and give us righteousness. (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

18. *Closing Plea*: Lord, for so long Your people hoped in the mystery that You would bring justice and mercy. But how could You be just and forgive our sin? And how could You be merciful and still punish sin? In Your glorious wisdom and love, You granted us Your Son, our holy representative. He would come and take our punishment and grant us His righteousness. In Him, You would be both just and merciful. Your ways are too wonderful for us, and we bow in joy before You. (*Eat tiny chocolate.*)

19. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones")*: O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, That mourns in lonely exile here, until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

20. *Spoken Response*: Our wine glasses remain empty as we long for the birth of a savior. (*Everyone clinks empty wine glasses together.*)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
A Family Liturgy for Christmas

Christmas Eve (Dec. 24): The view from just prior to Christ's birth (songs of Mary and Zacharias)

Supplies: "bone" dowels, empty wine glasses, sand-flour mix, vinegar, and tiny chocolates sit within reach of each person. The first nine candles of ten have been lit.

1. *Prayer:* O Lord, Your goodness and mercy overwhelm us. You have not left us in our sins. You have not left us with the powerless sacrifices of animals. You did not leave Your people to despair. You kept Your promises to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and the prophets. You granted us Messiah to bear our sins and conquer Your enemies. Hear our thanks tonight.

2. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* O come, O come, through Mary come, and answer ancient Abraham.

3. *Opening Thought:* After Israel's exile and repentance, God showed mercy to them by freeing them once again from slavery. And He told them of the new covenant to come. He showed them more clearly the mystery as to how He could be both just and forgiving, how He could punish our sin and forgive our sin. This was a great mystery. We learn that Messiah will bear our punishment and grant us His righteousness. Through this son of Abraham and David, God would bless all nations. But the people still waited, and God did little that was visible. Years after Israel's return from exile, God tried their faithfulness even more and stopped speaking through prophets. For over four hundred years God was silent. Many despaired and lost hope, waiting, waiting. But God is always faithful, even in His silence. When the time was right, God sent the angel Gabriel to bring the most important announcement in the history of the world to a humble, quiet, young woman in Nazareth. "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women! Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call his name Jesus."

4. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* She waits in David's Bethlehem, and angels sing good will to men.

5. *Spoken Response:* So how can we find forgiveness? The Lord will give us Jesus—the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

6. *Scripture Reading:* "And behold you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Lk. 1:31-33).

7. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the "bones"):* Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

8. *Spoken Response:* So how can we find forgiveness? The Lord will give us Jesus—the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

9. *Scripture Reading:* "And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all genera-

tions will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation” (Lk. 1:46-50).

10. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: O come, O come, through Mary, come, and answer ancient Abraham.

11. *Spoken Response*: So how can we find forgiveness? The Lord will give us Jesus—the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

12. *Scripture Reading*: [Mary continued] “He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever” (Lk. 1:51-55).

13. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: She waits in David’s Bethlehem, and angels sing good will to men.

14. *Spoken Response*: So how can we find forgiveness? The Lord will give us Jesus—the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

15. *Scripture Reading*: “Now [John the Baptist’s] father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied saying, ‘Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who have been since the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham” (Lk. 1:67-73).

16. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

17. *Spoken Response*: So how can we find forgiveness? The Lord will give us Jesus—the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. (*Dip and taste sand-flour then vinegar.*)

18. *Closing Plea*: Oh, Lord You *have* remembered Your people. You have remembered Your promises to Abraham and brought blessings to all nations. The desire of ages has come upon us through Mary—Christ Jesus the son of David and the Lamb of God. We bow before Your justice and mercy. May we see as He extends peace to all corners of the earth. (*Eat tiny chocolate.*)

19. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with the “bones”)*: O come, O come, through Mary, come, and answer ancient Abraham. She waits in David’s Bethlehem, and angels sing good will to men. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

20. *Spoken Response*: Our wine glasses remain empty as we long for the birth of a savior. (*Everyone clinks empty wine glasses together.*)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
A Family Liturgy for Christmas

Christmas Day (Dec. 25): The view Christ's birth.

Supplies: Hands or cymbals, for rhythm keeping. Special treats to usurp the sand-flour; real wine/champagne. All ten candles are lit.

1. *Prayer:* Father Almighty, Joy of joys you have brought to the world! You have answered our mourning and granted us the Prince of peace! You have sent the king to crush the seed of Satan. You have sent us the prophet to teach us truth. You have sent us the perfect priest to take away our sins. You have sent us Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. May we always be grateful and faithful. May You pour His blessings out upon our children and their children for a thousand generations.

2. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with hands or cymbals, no bones):* Joy to the world! the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare Him room, and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing, and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

3. *Opening Thought:* The long-awaited Messiah has come! God is with us, Emmanuel! This is the message of Christmas. Now the darkness begun with Adam is starting to turn back. Now Christ has started to extend His holy kingdom to all corners of the earth, even here! But Christ was not born like worldly kings. He was born in a humble estate, in a manger, for His parents could find no rest at an inn. The greatest King of the world entered the world like a quiet lamb in a stable. The king has come! As the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!" God has indeed kept His promises to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David. Let us rejoice!

4. *Sung Response:* Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

5. *Spoken Response:* Rejoice! Forgiveness and justice have come! Jesus Christ is Emmanuel. (*Each person takes a sip of wine and eats a treat.*)

6. *Scripture Reading:* "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem. . . . So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn" (Lk. 2:4,7).

7. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with hands or cymbals, no bones):* No more let sins and sorrows grow, Nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found, far as, far as, the curse if found.

8. *Spoken Response:* Rejoice! Forgiveness and justice have come! Jesus Christ is Emmanuel. (*Each person takes a sip of wine and eats a treat.*)

9. *Scripture Reading:* "Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over the flock by night. And behold an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid,

for behold I bring your good tidings of great joy which will be to all people” (Lk. 2:8-11)

10. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with hands or cymbals, no bones):* He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness, and wonders of his love, and wonders of His love, and wonders, wonders of His love.

11. *Spoken Response:* Rejoice! Forgiveness and justice have come! Jesus Christ is Emmanuel. (*Each person takes a sip of wine and eats a treat.*)

12. *Scripture Reading:* “For there is born to you this day in the city of David, a savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you; You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!’” (Lk. 2:11-14).

13. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with hands or cymbals, no bones):* Joy to the world! the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King; Let every heart prepare Him room, and heav’n and nature sing, and heav’n and nature sing, and heaven and heaven and nature sing.

14. *Spoken Response:* Rejoice! Forgiveness and justice have come! Jesus Christ is Emmanuel. (*Each person takes a sip of wine and eats a treat.*)

15. *Scripture Reading:* “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. . . . As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God” (Jn. 1:14,12).

16. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with hands or cymbals, no bones):* Joy to the earth! the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

17. *Spoken Response:* Rejoice! Forgiveness and justice have come! Jesus Christ is Emmanuel. (*Each person takes a sip of wine and eats a treat.*)

18. *Closing Praise:* Messiah has come! Emmanuel, God with us! He will take our punishment and grant us His perfect righteousness. He will reverse the Fall of Adam. He will reverse the curse of sin on the earth. Teach us to always be grateful. Teach us to love Him with all our hearts and minds.

19. *Sung Response (keep rhythm with hands or cymbals, no bones):* He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove the glories of His righteousness, and wonders of his love, and wonders of His love, and wonders, wonders of His love.

20. *Spoken Response:* Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men! (*Each person takes a sip of wine and eats a treat. Everyone clinks wine glasses together.*)