



Adorable

AN INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE FOR CHRISTMAS

Based on the hymn 'O come, all ye faithful'
Focusing on the one baby who was truly 'adorable'.

Adorable (adjective) worthy of being adored
Adore (verb) 1. to regard with the utmost esteem, love and respect.
 2. to honour as divine; worship
Adoration (noun) 1. The act of paying honour to a divine being, worship.
 2. fervent and devoted love

NOTES

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INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP — WHAT IS IT?

All-age (intergenerational) worship is, first and foremost, worship — an encounter between God and God's people; a dialogue in which God speaks and people respond, both in the worship service and in their lives.

Intentionally *intergenerational* worship

- allows this dialogue to take place through several of the senses, and through movement, activity and fun
- focuses on a single gospel theme and connects that theme with the lives of the worshippers. It reinforces the theme by exploring it in several different ways

- encourages interaction and dialogue among people of the various generations represented in the worshipping community
- provides worshipers (young and old) with an experience and thoughts they can remember and talk about in their homes. It may provide resources to support that conversation
- differs from worship that is planned by adults for adults, and differs from worship for children alone — planned either by adults or by children
- takes seriously the understanding that people of all ages worship together in the body of Christ. People of all ages can also plan worship, invite people to worship, and lead worship
- recognises and values the children present in the worshipping congregation and 'the child within' each adult.

INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP — WHY DO IT?

We love the image of the church as a family. Most families are made up of people of several generations experiencing life together. In the church, people of all generations can learn, serve and worship together.

The Biblical model is of generations together. The idea of segregating generations is a relatively recent phenomenon.

God speaks to and through people of all ages. The presence of children in a service forces the leaders to be clear and creative in what they do. This benefits everyone.

Beside the theological appropriateness of all-age worship, there are some practical issues — particularly at Christmas time.

Australians see Christmas as family time. As a church we want to provide a worship experience that adds to, rather than detracts from, the focus on family.

This applies to your own members (and extended family that joins them at Christmas time). It also applies to guests, fringe-members and people in the community who are drawn to do something 'religious' at Christmas.

The guests you invite to your church at Christmas may be of any age. You want to plan a worship that does not exclude any age group.

USING THIS DOCUMENT

These notes have been prepared by the Resource Centre for Children's and Family

Ministry of the Uniting Church (SA) to help congregations plan a special Christmas worship for people of all ages.

You may make as many copies of the notes as needed for your worship planners and leaders.

The use of music and other copyright elements is not covered in this permission.

Read through all the material. Discuss it as a planning team. You may use any of the ideas that are appropriate in your situation or you may use the entire sample service.

If you use the resource, we would appreciate your letting us know what you do. Send a brief email to rccfm@bigpond.com

For other intergenerational worship ideas see <http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au>

'STAGING' AN Adorable WORSHIP SERVICE

An **Adorable** worship service can be held in almost any venue where people gather. It can be staged in a church, a hall, an outdoor setting or in a home.

The key to organising the service is to keep it simple so that planners and presenters are not stressed and worshipers are comfortable.

To aid the participation of worshipers, have words of songs and other elements of the worship service displayed on a screen (PowerPoint or other presentation format). This requires that the worshipers are seated in rows (straight or curved) so that they can see the screen easily.

Adorable lends itself to presentation 'in the round', but this may require printed service orders / song sheet for the worshipers.

Apart from a screen, the primary visual focus of the service is a manger. If necessary have this on a platform so that it can easily be seen by all worshipers.

You will also need a cross — either an existing cross in your worship space or a cross brought to the worship area.

CRADLE TO CROSS If you have people who are willing and able to do the construction work, a feature of the service can be the 'morphing' of your cradle/manger into a cross. The construction can be of wood or sturdy corrugated cardboard. See the pattern for the paper version on page x.

Alternatively, have a cross in the manger, covered with blanket and/or straw. Turn the

manger upside down and use it as a base for the cross.

Either way, make sure that the cross can stand solidly when it is put up.

LEADING/PRESENTING AN Adorable WORSHIP SERVICE

People who decorate the worship area have a key role and should be involved in planning.

Your hospitality team is part of your worship team and should be well aware of plans for the service.

Your tech team (and/or people responsible for preparing electronic or printed materials) have a vital leadership role.

As for the people who stand up front — Adorable can be led entirely by one person, or several people can lead various segments of the service. The intergenerational aspect of the service is emphasised if people of all ages are worship leaders.

The main **WORSHIP LEADER** is responsible for seeing that the service runs as smoothly as possible. Other people may take on specific roles, eg

- reading the Bible passages
- presenting the message/sermon
- leading the confession of sins
- speaking the assurance of forgiveness
- leading prayers
- making announcements.

Other participants take on specific roles in the first part of the service:

- mother and infant (unless you use a doll)
- contemporary passers-by
- angel, or angels (costumed)
- two or more shepherds (costumed)
- Zachariah and Anna (costumed)

A child or group of children may present a recitation.

MUSIC TEAM Since the service revolves around a song, you will need to have someone leading singing. This can be a singer with a guitar, a choir with an organ or a lead singer with a band or (in a pinch) recorded music.

Since there are basically only two songs to learn, musicians can prepare with a minimum of practice or may enjoy the challenge of presenting each verse of *O come, all ye faithful* in a different way.

REPETITION

Repetition enhances memory. We are more likely to remember something if we hear, see or do it several times rather than once.

We are also more likely to remember songs than spoken words.

In order to create a memorable Christmas worship experience, Adorable uses repetition of the song 'O come, let us adore him'.

Most worshipers will be familiar with some verses of this familiar carol, and will be comfortable joining in the singing. Familiarity with the tune can allow them to focus on the words.

Hopefully after several repetitions, worshipers will recognise the pattern, anticipate what is coming and thus become more deeply involved in the worship.

If you feel that six verses of the same song is too much of a good thing, you may use alternative hymns or carols.

FELLOWSHIP

Some people who worship with you at Christmas squeeze worship in among other activities. They will dash in and want to dash out immediately. Others, particularly people who experience a quiet Christmas, either by choice or by circumstances, will appreciate some time with other people following your service.

Seriously consider setting up a café environment where people can gather after the service to chat and enjoy a snack.

You may even have members of your congregation teed up to use this time to make contact with lonely people and invite them to spend time with their family at Christmas.

Make room for children. Take a leaf from the play cafes and have a separate area nearby with toys available where young children can safely play.

Supervised outdoor play and snacks for older children may be more appropriate.

Also provide a quiet space and a prayer counsellor for anyone who wants to talk with someone regarding special concerns that surface at Christmas time.

TAKE IT HOME

Hopefully worshipers will have the tune of *O Come, let us adore him* echoing in their minds for days to come. Whenever they hear the

carol sung, they may recall the worship experience.

You may also like to give them something concrete to take with them as a memento, eg the manger craft (page 10). You could

distribute printed pattern sheets to be made up at home. Alternatively, as part of your fellowship plan, set up workspace where people can make them after worship.

SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

Café Adorable



Hold the service in a space set up as a café, with tables and chairs arranged around a central platform.

On each table have song sheets / service orders and a box with materials for making the manger (page 10).

Before the service waiters take care of food service. This can range from very simple,

eg a bowl of popcorn and bottles of ginger beer with serviettes and plastic cups at each table

to personal orders from a menu board,

eg cake, gingerbread man, white Christmas, ginger beer, sparkling punch (lemonade and cranberry juice, coffee, tea.

Before the service have entertainment, eg live music performance or recorded carols.

At the start of the worship itself, the mother and child move to the central platform. Waiting staff become the passers-by.

The service proceeds as in the script.

People can continue eating and drinking, but there is no food service during the service.

Adorable

THE WORSHIP SCRIPT

Music team plays the tune of *O, come let us adore him* ('O come') as people arrive.

A manger stands at front or centre.

INTRODUCING THE THEME

INSTRUMENTALISTS increase volume of playing to indicate the start of worship.

A mother with an infant sits beside the manger or a doll lies in it.

PASSERS-BY: Several people in contemporary clothing pass by the manger singly and in groups of two or three. They look at the baby and make comment to the mum or to one another: eg 'Oh, isn't he lovely' . . . 'just the cutest thing' . . . 'a real little charmer, that one' . . . 'He's going to be a real handful' . . . 'I remember when you were little like that'. Keep this as natural as possible. They move on and take seats in the congregation.

Last of the passers-by says, 'Isn't he adorable!'

[DISPLAY] definition of adorable (see page 1)

WORSHIP LEADER: *All babies are lovely.
[May make reference to babies present.]
One baby was truly adorable — and is still worthy of our utmost esteem and love 2000 years after his birth. One baby is worthy of our worship.*

*Welcome to our celebration of the birth of Jesus, who has been called 'God with us'.
Come, let us adore him!*

[DISPLAY] words of hymn

Hymn: *O come, v.1
(O come, let us adore him)*

BIBLE READINGS

BIBLE READER: *Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea there were shepherds, out in the fields . . . (Luke 2:8-14)*

ANGEL (or angels) moves to the manger, look at the child and says: 'He is truly adorable! Come, let us adore him.'
Angel kneels by the manger.

[DISPLAY] words of hymn

Hymn: *O come, v.2
(Sing choirs of angels)*

BIBLE READER: *After the angels had left them . . . (Luke 2:15-20)*

SHEPHERDS move to the manger, look at the child and say: 'He is adorable. Come let us adore him.'
Shepherd kneels by the manger.

[DISPLAY] words of hymn

Hymn: *O come, v.3
(See how the shepherds)*

BIBLE READER: *Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem. . . (Luke 2:25-32, the entire passage or a shortened version)*

BIBLE READER: *There was also a prophetess, Anna. . . (Luke 2:36-38)*

ANNA AND ZECHARIAH move to the manger, look at the child and say: 'He is adorable! He is the spitting image of his Father.' They kneel (or sit) by the manger.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

WORSHIP LEADER: *We believe that Jesus was truly the image of his heavenly Father; God in the flesh.*

Please consider these amazing words:

[DISPLAY] words of hymn, verse 4.

We believe that Jesus — of all the babies ever born on earth — was and is: the only-begotten Son of God.

As God's Son, Jesus is greater and more holy than anything we can imagine. Read with me:

*Highest
most holy,
Light of Light
eternal.*

As God's Son, Jesus chose to be born (and die) as a human being. Read with me:

*born of a virgin,
a mortal he comes.
Son of the Father
Now in flesh appearing!.*

Focus shifts from manger to the cross.

The shepherds re-form the cradle into a cross.
Costumed characters leave and take seats in the congregation

WORSHIP LEADER (at the cross): *We adore Jesus this Christmas, not as just a cute baby. We adore him because of who he is and what he does for us. Come, let us adore him.*

[DISPLAY] words of hymn

Hymn: *O come, v.4 (Highest, most holy)* After the regular chorus, add the extra chorus: 'For you alone are worthy'.

MESSAGE

[DISPLAY] How can I adore Jesus?

WORSHIP LEADER: *How do I adore Jesus? How do I respond to the Son of God, born as a human being for me, dying as a human being for me, living eternally for me?*

Everyone who encounters Jesus must ask that question.

At this point you could play a recording of Mary Magdalene's song: 'I don't know how to love him' from *Jesus Christ, Superstar*.

WORSHIP LEADER: *How can we adore Jesus? Children have a simple, but profound answer.*

CHILD (or several children) move beside the manger and recite (or read) the Christina Rossetti poem:

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise man
I would do my part.
Yet what can I give Him?
Give my heart.

And/or children sing and mime or dance: 'Jesus, we adore you' (From 'Father we adore you' ©1982 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing)

And/or children sing: *O come, little children* (traditional; J.P.A. Schulz)

SERMON: *How can we adore him?*

WORSHIP LEADER or **MINISTER** presents a brief message of the answers to the question found in Philippians 2:5-11.

- Service: Have an attitude of service to one another like Jesus
- Worship: Confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

End with the invitation, *Come, let us adore him.*

[DISPLAY] words of hymn

Hymn: *O come, v.5 (Child, for us sinners)*
or *He is Lord* (Kelly Price)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

WORSHIP LEADER: *I'm going to pray a prayer of confession. It expresses how I feel. You may follow along silently or read it aloud if you wish. These words may not say what you are thinking and feeling. Feel free to pray your own prayer silently.*

WL faces the cross for the prayer.

[DISPLAY] the confession

Jesus, I confess that I do not always have the same attitude as you demonstrated.

It's hard for me to be humble and to and to put other people's needs before my own.

I have trouble being obedient — even to your simple rule of loving you and loving other people.

And I don't adore you with my whole heart. I feel comfortable think of you as a cute Christmas baby. But I am challenged when I think of you as the God who created the universe, humbled, allowing yourself to suffer a painful death because of me, my selfishness and rebellion.

I'm so sorry, Jesus. Please help me.

WORSHIP LEADER OR MINISTER:

The good news is that when we come to him honestly, acknowledging our weakness and sin, God does forgive us — because of what Jesus did.

Celebrate Christmas; adore Jesus, knowing that you are forgiven.

[DISPLAY] words of hymn

Hymn: *Joyful, joyful, we adore Thee* (van Dyke/Beethoven)
v1 (*Joyful, joyful we adore thee*) and
v3 (*Thou art giving and forgiving*).

OFFERING

WORSHIP LEADER: *As a church we adore Jesus through various things we do.*

Make brief announcements about notices and concerns of the church, particularly about ministries supported by offerings.

As a church we adore Jesus by supporting these ministries with financial gifts. If you are not a member of this church, do not feel compelled to give an offering.

Collect the offering in your usual way.

As the offering is collected the **MUSIC TEAM** may play instrumental music, eg a medley of familiar Christmas hymns.

PRAYERS

PRAYER LEADER: *We adore Jesus by accepting his invitation to speak to him about things that concern us. Let us pray.*

PRAYER LEADER leads the prayers of the people. Rather than a single long prayer, have a bidding prayer format in which the PRAYER LEADER announces a topic, eg Let us pray for the leaders of this country. Several people say brief prayers, each on one of the topics.

You may conclude the prayers with the Lord's Prayer, either spoken or sung to the tune of O come (see page 8).

[DISPLAY] The Lord's Prayer

SENDING OUT

WORSHIP LEADER: *We are coming to the end of our time of adoring Jesus in this place. Thank you for sharing this time with us.*

Continue adoring him in the days and weeks ahead — in your relationships, your work, your words and your thoughts.

God, the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ bless you and keep you and give you his peace. Amen.

[DISPLAY] words of hymn

Hymn: O come, v 6.

(All hail, Lord, we greet thee),

add two extra choruses: 'For you alone are worthy' and 'We'll give you all the glory'.

O Come All Ye Faithful!

LYRICS

1. O come, all ye faithful
joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of Angels:
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

2. Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing all that hear in heaven God's holy word.
Give to our Father glory in the Highest:
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

3. See how the shepherds,
summoned to his cradle,
leaving their flocks, draw nigh to gaze on him.
We too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps:
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

4. Highest, most holy,
Light of Light eternal,
born of a virgin,
a mortal he comes.
Son of the Father
Now in flesh appearing!
Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

5. Child, for us sinners,
poor and in the manger,
we would embrace thee, with love and awe.
Who would not love thee,
Loving us so dearly?
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

6. Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
Born this happy morning;
[or 'born *that* happy morning']
Jesus, to thee be glory given!
Word of the Father,
Now in flesh appearing!
Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven
Holy is your name
O come rule on earth as you rule in Heav'n
Give us today
what we need today
Forgive our sins and help us
to forgive our neighbours.
Lead us and protect us
In Jesus' name.

Repeat chorus:

For yours is the kingdom
and yours is the power
and yours is the glory
forever. Amen

Extra choruses from Matt Redman:

For you alone are worthy.
We'll give you all the glory.

O Come All Ye Faithful!

STORY OF THE CAROL

THE SHORT VERSION

The text to the hymn/carol 'O Come All Ye Faithful' was originally written in Latin (*Adeste Fideles*). It is attributed to John Wade, an English Catholic hymn-writer. The music was composed by fellow Englishman John Reading in the early 1700s. The tune was first published in a collection known as *Cantus Diversi* in 1751. The hymn was translated into English in 1841 by Rev. Frederick Oakley.

THE LONGER VERSION

LYRICS The authorship of '*Adeste Fideles*', has been attributed to various different poets, but is still a mystery. Some believe that it was an old carol connected with dancing around the manger, and that it might have been used by St. Francis of Assisi. Others claim it came from the 13th century and was the song of a Franciscan friar, St. Bonaventura, who was an associate of St. Francis. Other historians state that '*Adeste Fideles*' was written by an unknown French poet during the reign of Louis XIV.

It is now the general consensus that Englishman John Francis Wade either found the stanzas or wrote them in connection with his music copying and research work in Douay, France.

TUNE Several similar musical themes (by composers including Handel) were written around the same time. It's hard to determine whether these were written in imitation of the hymn, the hymn was based on them, or they are totally unconnected.

The music is now generally attributed to Samuel Webbe. Webbe played the organ in the chapel of the Portuguese embassy in London and used this tune on so many occasions that it became known as 'The Portuguese Hymn'. This led some historians to believe that it had its origin in Portugal.

The earliest existing manuscript *Cantus Diversi* (1751) shows both words and tune.

VERSIONS and TRANSLATION Englishman Rev. Frederick Oakeley was so delighted by the published Latin version of '*Adeste Fideles*' that, in 1841, he translated it into English, entitling it, 'Ye Faithful, Approach Ye'. Eleven years later he published an improved version, the familiar 'O come, all ye faithful'.

The carol has been translated into some 120 languages and dialects. The original text consisted of four Latin verses. The Abbé

Etienne Jean Francois Borderies wrote an additional three verses in the 18th century (translated by William Thomas Brooke).

JOHN FRANCIS WADE and a CONSPIRACY THEORY

John Francis Wade (1711 – 1786) was an English hymnist. He is credited with writing and composing the hymn *Adeste Fideles*.

Born in either England or in Douai, France, Wade fled to France after the defeat of the Second Jacobite rising (the last — and unsuccessful — attempt by the exiled House of Stuart to regain the throne of Great Britain and Ireland).

As a Catholic layman, he lived with exiled English Catholics in France for the rest of his life. There, he taught music and worked on church music for private use.

Wade's Jacobite connection led to a theory that the hymn was a birth ode to Prince Charles Edward Stuart (Bonnie Prince Charlie, born 20 December 1720).

According to the theory: 'faithful' was a secret political code for the Jacobites; Bethlehem was a common Jacobite cipher for England and 'choirs of angels' was a pun on *Angelorum* (Angels) and *Anglorum* (English). The earliest forms of the carol commonly appeared in English Roman Catholic liturgical books in the same section as prayers for the exiled Old Pretender. It was often decorated with Jacobite floral imagery, as were other liturgical texts with coded Jacobite meanings.

Professor Bennett Zon, Department of Music at Durham University, who explains the alternative interpretation, concludes with these words:

Adeste Fideles seems to have lost its Jacobite meanings not long after Wade's last published book in 1773, perhaps as Jacobitism ebbed in popular consciousness and as Roman Catholics neared religious freedom in the late 1770s. The real meaning of the carol, remains, however, although whose birth we choose to celebrate in it remains a matter of personal decision.

Our decision is to adore Jesus!

MANGER PATTERN

Photo
of
finished
manger



1. Cut out along solid lines
2. Fold forward on the line marked Hiding the writing.
3. Fold backward on the lines marked - - - - -
4. This forms an open box with the writing in the bottom.
5. Fold down each of the top edges of box about 1cm, forming a lip.
6. Run a length of raffia or ribbon around the box, under the lips and tie to hold up the sides of the manger box.

O come
let us
adore him
Christ,
the Lord

