

# The Common Rule

Habits of Light for a World of Darkness

## A CHRISTMAS MORNING LITURGY



**Instructions:** This Christmas Morning Liturgy is a way to lean into the celebration of the incarnation on Christmas day. Work it in after Christmas breakfast, before you exchange gifts, or even after Christmas dinner if that is best. It takes about 10-15 minutes.



**You will need:** Print copies of this liturgy for everyone, or go to [thecommonrule.org/advent-xmas-morning-liturgy](http://thecommonrule.org/advent-xmas-morning-liturgy) to read on a phone.



**For Reading:** You will need a Leader & one Reader. All scripture readings are printed here.



**Small Children:** This is written to involve small children, who have one repeated line: on your signal (perhaps the raising of your hand) they will act surprised & yell "Wow!!!" Make sure to practice one or twice beforehand. Older children might prefer to simply read along with the adults.



**Supplies:** In the case of small children, chocolate milk & marshmallows may be involved, if desired. This will help with excitement and attention span. Have milk poured in appropriate cups & plenty of marshmallows ready in advance.



**For Songs:** If the group is comfortable with signing the song verses, do so! If that will not be comfortable, just have everyone read them together.

# A CHRISTMAS MORNING LITURGY

**Leader:** Merry Christmas!

**People:** Merry Christmas!

**Leader:** It was a real morning, with real people, with real bodies, like the ones sitting in this room, when a baby was born. This is how it happened:

**Reader:** *In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. Joseph also went up from Galilee to Bethlehem to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.*

*[Leader signals children.]*

**Children:** Wow!

**Leader:** I know! It was remarkable! This is why we sing:

**All Sing (or Read):** *Away in a manger no crib for a bed.  
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the sky looked down where he lay.  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.*

**Leader to Children:** Do you think baby Jesus had milk in the barn? (*Entertain answers.*) Do you think he had chocolate milk? (*Entertain answers.*) Do you all want some chocolate milk while you hear more of the story? (*As chaos dies down, hand out chocolate milk.*) Now, everyone keep listening for the rest of the story:

**Reader:** *And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and 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 among those with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.*

*[Leader signals children.]*

**Children:** Wow!

**Leader:** I know. Can you believe it? A baby and a star. Fire and song. This is when the world was forever changed. It's this baby, who will save us from our sins. Can you believe it?

**People:** We believe it!

**Leader:** This is why we sing:

**All Sing (or Read):** *Angels we have heard on high  
Sweetly singing o'er the plains  
And the mountains in reply  
Echoing their joyous strains*

*Gloria, in excelsis Deo*

*Gloria, in excelsis Deo*

**Leader to Children:** Do you think the shepherds had sheep? (*Entertain answers.*) Are sheep white and fluffy? (*Entertain answers.*) What else is white and fluffy? (*Provide hints until marshmallows are guessed, hand out said marshmallows.*) Now, eat some marshmallows while we hear more.

**Leader to All:** Because there is much more! This baby grew up. Just like these children here. He became a boy who became a man who became a teacher. When he spoke - people were amazed! Listen to the kinds of things he said. He said that, because of him, we could finally be reconciled to God:

**Reader:** *Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

**Leader:** He said that, because of him, the vulnerable would finally be protected:

**Reader:** *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*

**Leader:** He said that, because of him, we can all finally rest:

**Reader:** *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

**Leader:** Are you tired?

**People:** We are.

**Leader:** Then rest in Jesus. This is why we sing:

**All Sing (or Read):** *Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art;  
dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.*

*(Second round of marshmallows optional here.)*

**Leader:** Hear now the good news of this baby that was born: He was not just born, but he lived. And he did not just live, but he died. And he did not just die but he rose again. And he did not just rise again, but he will come again. To set all things right.

**People:** Let it be so!

**Leader:** Now, because of him, all that we've done and all that we've failed to do; all the good things and all the bad things, now they all fade away in the bright shadow of the love of Jesus the resurrected Son of God.

*[Leader signals children.]*

**Children:** Wow!

**Leader:** And when he comes again all people will beat their spears into plowshares. Melt their guns into spoons for food. Chains will break. War will be no more.

**People:** We are waiting for a day when the sun will rise on a new world. With no tears, no dying, and no pain.

**Leader:** It is Jesus who will bring this world. Can you believe it?

**People:** We believe it!

*[Leader signals children.]*

**Children:** Wow!

**Leader:** This is why we sing:

**All Sing (or Read):** *Joy to the world, the Lord is come  
Let earth receive her King  
Let every heart prepare Him room  
And Heaven and nature sing  
And Heaven and nature sing  
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing*

**Leader:** How we long for you to come again. For you we will celebrate. For you we will wait.

**All in Loud Voices:** *King of kings. Mighty God. Counselor. Emmanuel. Come again soon. Today, for you, we will celebrate. Tomorrow, for you, we will wait. Amen!*

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