

Christmas Eve All Age & All Stage Worship Event – Kiwi Christmas

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Welcome/Call to Worship – Let there be light

In the beginning was the one
who is called the Word.

The Word was with God
and was truly God.

From the very beginning
the Word was with God.

And with this Word,
God created all things.

Nothing was made
without the Word.

Everything that was created
received its life from him,
and his life gave light
to everyone.

John 1:1-5 CEV



Welcome to our Kiwi Christmas Eve worship event tonight. To begin please talk to the other people at your table and introduce yourselves.

Talk about what you know and understand about light.

Then when you are ready can you please turn on your camping lantern and the other light sources at your table.

This is the signal that we are coming to worship Jesus, the Light of the World and celebrate his birth tonight.

Opening Prayer

This prayer has a response. I'll say one line and then everyone will respond with the words ***"Jesus, you are the Light of the World"***

In New Zealand, the light is bright at Christmas.

Jesus, you are the Light of the World

The sun shines from early in the morning to late in the evening

Jesus, you are the Light of the World

The sand and the waves at the beach glisten in the sunshine

Jesus, you are the Light of the World

The Southern Cross hangs in the night sky

Jesus, you are the Light of the World

The camping lanterns, and torches are filled with new batteries

Jesus, you are the Light of the World

Everywhere there is light

Jesus, you are the Light of the World

Let there be light in our hearts as we gather here tonight

Jesus, you are the Light of the World

Amen.

Carol - O Come all Ye Faithful

We are going to sing O Come all Ye Faithful.

We have the words so you can sing along or if you want you can just listen to the words and enjoy the Christmas music and lights.

Bible Reading – Four Voices – Excerpts from Luke Chapter 1 & 2 (Contemporary English Version)

Voice 1: About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people to be listed in record books.

Voice 2: Everyone had to go to their own home town.

Voice 3: Mary was engaged to Joseph and travelled with him to Bethlehem.

Voice 4: She was soon going to have a baby.

Voice 1: While they were there, she gave birth to her first-born son.

Voice 3: That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep.

Voice 1: All at once an angel came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them.

Voice 2: The shepherds were frightened.

Voice 3: But the angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone happy.

Voice 1: This very day a Saviour was born for you.

Voice 4: He is Christ the Lord.

Voice 2: You will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay."

Voice 3: Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God.

Voice 1: After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about."

Voice 2: They hurried off.

Voice 3: and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay.

Voice 1: When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him.

Voice 4: Everyone listened and was surprised.

Voice 3: But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant.

Voice 1: As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him.

Voice 2: Everything they had seen

Voice 4: and heard

Voice 3: was just as the angel had said.

Drawing on the Tables

Draw and talk about your drawings to the people next to you.

What are some of the best things about Christmas in New Zealand?

What does Christmas mean to you?

While you're drawing, we're going to play some Christmas music called "Shine your Light" by Hi-5

Play Shine Your Light - Hi5

Carol – Away in a Manger - & Nativity Tableau

Would the children who are in the Nativity Play please come up the front and stand over to the side while I arrange where you're going to stand. *(Pause while children come up. Leader arranges children in their places as each person or group of people is explained to the gathering.)*

First we need Mary to sit on the seat by the manger. Mary is the mother of Jesus and beside her we need Joseph. They are looking very hot and summery today in their New Zealand beach clothes.

The shepherds were the first ones to hear the news that Jesus had been born. Our New Zealand shepherds have come straight from the farm. We need the shepherds to stand next to Mary and Joseph.

The angels told Mary that she was going to have a baby. The angel also told Joseph. The angels announced it to the shepherds too. The angels are going to stand behind Mary and Joseph. Our angels are like a singing choir.

Now we need some wise international students who travelled from far distant lands following a star in the sky. These visitors brought gifts. They stand next to Mary and Joseph too.

(Pause until all children are in positions)

Parents and grandparents might like to come up the front and take photos now while the children are in their positions.

(Pause while photos are being taken)

We are now going to sing Away in a Manger

Storytime – Kiwi Christmas

While our Nativity Scene is still in place I am going to read the story, "Kiwi Christmas" by Joy Cowley.

Following the Star

The wise students followed the star to find Jesus when he was born. Now we are going to follow the light of the star to show that we too are on a journey to find Jesus. The Star will be like a “follow the leader” game. It will start moving from the Nativity Scene and the players in the scene will follow it around the room. The people sitting at tables can join in following the star. The star will travel around the room while the music plays. When the music stops the star will stop over the manger where baby Jesus is lying and everyone can return to their seats.

Play: Christmas Star by John Williams

Light filled Responsive Prayer

In the Kiwi Christmas story we heard about the light that filled Mary and shines in us. This is the light which comes from Jesus.

What is something you’d like to praise God about? Maybe there is something you’re very thankful to God for, like being happy with your family. Maybe you want to tell God that you’re glad God loves you or that Jesus was born. We’re going to make a paper lantern and attach it to a plastic cup. This is a light holder. It represents us. We are light holders of the light that comes from Jesus. While you are making your lanterns talk together about how God works in your lives and helps you to shine out God’s light.

Say out loud, “God I want to thank you for....” And say one thing you want to praise God about.

[http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Paper-Lantern#Making a Lantern with a Handle sub](http://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Paper-Lantern#Making_a_Lantern_with_a_Handle_sub)

Play: The First Noel

Carol - Silent Night

Turn on a battery tea light and put it into the plastic cup in your paper lantern

We are going to turn off the main lights while we sing this even though it’s not very dark. If you don’t know the words that’s okay. Just listen to the tape and think about Jesus whose birth we celebrate tonight.

Gift Giving

At Christmas we like to get presents ourselves. For Christmas this year I hope I will get... I have a long list of things I would like. But Christmas is also a time to think about other people. We’re going to do that now in two ways. Firstly, we’re going to pray for people in our neighbourhood and our country and our world who are experiencing hard times right now.

We also have a tradition of collecting money to give to poor people. Let me tell you what our money gifts are for this year... If you want to put some money in the gift box as you leave tonight, this will go towards this special cause. So let’s pray.

Lord we pray for those around us who are having difficult times.

We pray for those who don’t have enough to eat, or a place to call home.

We pray for those who are hurt and sick, or who do not have anyone to love them.

We pray for those who are in the middle of fights and do not have peace.

Be with them all this Christmas.

Amen.

Star Shortbreads & Happy Birthday to Jesus

Christmas is the celebration of Jesus’ birthday. At your tables there is a box of shortbread stars, plastic plates to decorate them on and take them away and some icing tubes to decorate them. You can decorate a star and take it home with you to give to someone you love as a reminder that Jesus is the light for the world. As you decorate your star, we’re going to sing Happy Birthday to Jesus.

Song: Happy Birthday to Jesus

Closing Prayer

Thank you Jesus, for this celebration of your birthday.

Thank you for being light that fills up each of us and shows us the way to go.

Be with us as we journey away from this place this Christmas Eve.

Amen.

Notes on running this event

This is a non-traditional, informal format for an All-Ages, All-Stages Christmas Eve worship event based on Joy Cowley's book, "Kiwi Christmas". It's written for a New Zealand setting, but it's possible to adapt to other settings. Allow between forty-five minutes and an hour. This is not a "one-size fits all" event. You'll need to adapt it to fit in with your own settings whether that's a small or large church, a community building or in your own home with a small group of friends and family.

I've written it "scripted style" so that a group of older children and young teens could take the whole event, and follow the first three sheets as the script. I've also imagined you meeting around tables because that's the preferred format for most of the worship events I run. However, none of this is essential. Make this worship event about your people. If you have the space and time to do so, you might want to move some furniture, but if not, just be relaxed and adapt this to fit in your place and time.

Setting up

This is an interactive worship event so there are a few things you'll need to organise and set up before Christmas Eve including people, equipment and your space.

The Space

Decorate your space with New Zealand native greenery. You could cut some sprigs and branches and have these arranged, or bring in some potted native plants. Add warm twinkling lights reflecting off silver or gold tinsel. Spread around seashells such as paua or pieces of driftwood to give the place a summer beachy feeling. This is Christmas southern hemisphere style! You'll also need a manger with some hay inside it and a baby doll wrapped in white cloth hidden somewhere to appear in the Nativity Scene.

The Tables

Pre-cover the tables with newspaper.

At every table have a battery powered camping lantern and some other light making battery powered devices (eg. Torch, battery candles, Christmas lights.)

Place a box under one chair at each table. It should contain the following to be brought out as required for tactile activities.

- 1) Crayons
- 2) Precut card, scissors, staplers, plastic cups
- 3) Battery tea-light candles
- 4) Shortbread stars, plastic plates, tubes of icing

The Leaders

This could be led by several children or teens, or include an adult or two, or just by a single adult or child. Go through the script and assign parts and make sure everyone understands what they're doing. If you're using several people you may need a quick run through with them before you begin. You'll also need at least one person to look after your music, slideshows and equipment throughout the event.

The Bible Reading

You'll need four readers. In selecting the voices consider reading ages. Voice 1 and 3 are the most difficult with Voice 2 and 4 being suitable for early readers. Readers are seated around the room and stand up where they are to read their lines.

The Nativity Scene

Prearrange children to come dressed for a "Nativity Tableau Photo". Preselect a Joseph and Mary and a Star and make sure you'll have at least one person each dressing as Shepherds, Angels and Wise Students. Let the rest of children decide if they want to be Angels, Shepherds or Wise Students. Rather than the traditional nativity clothing suggest the following:

Mary – Beachwear such as togs covered with a blue hooded beach towel cover-up or blue beach wrap.

Joseph – Board shorts and a singlet, zinc on his lips or cheeks, sunglasses and a sunhat, jandals, beach towel over his shoulder.

Shepherds – Black singlets, baggy shorts, gumboots and checked shirts.

Angels – Pasifika dress or wraps, flower garlands, flowers in hair.

Wise International Students – School uniforms or ordinary clothes from other countries, carrying books or clipboards or electronic devices such as tablets or smartphones, cameras. Anything which makes them look like they are overseas students on an exchange to New Zealand from another country.

The Star – Dressed in white with silver or gold and carrying a cardboard glittery star on a stick. The star on the stick will later be used to insert into the manger above Jesus' head.

Have some spare outfits or props for those children who have not turned up prepared.

The Projection

If you have the ability to project images, then prepare the following:

- A slideshow series of images of lights for the Call to Worship
- A slideshow series of images of New Zealand Christmas with beaches, pohutukawas, BBQs and outdoor events for Drawing on the Tables
- Video clip of the Aurora Australis for the Nativity Scene <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hLIVwy5mOk>
- A slideshow series of images of the New Zealand night sky with the Southern Cross for the Storytime
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The Music

Taped music or a singer and accompaniment for group singing of O Come All Ye Faithful, Away in a Manger and Silent Night

Track – *Shine your Light* by Hi-5 (Drawing on the Tables)

Track – *Christmas Star* by John Williams (Following the Star)

Track – *The First Noel* (Light Filled Responsive Prayer)