

A Devotional Booklet for Christmas Eve through Epiphany



**Christmas Eve 2023:
Imagine
Embodiment!**



Created by Pastor Timothy Seitz-Brown using content from Tony Campolo and the online resource: https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/YearB_23-24.Christmas.pdf?_ga=2.135005425.1601090731.1702570013-1753612429.1702570013

IMAGINE A MAN WHO LOVED ANTS

(Based upon a story from Tony Campolo)

Imagine a man who loved ants.
Out behind his house he had an anthill.
And every day he would go out and tell the ants,
I love you! I love you! I love you!

Of course, the ants never got the message.
They didn't even know there was a man trying to communicate to them.
Because he was a man, and they were ants. Duh!

So, the man did something more than just shout.
Each day he would bring them sugar, pieces of bread, and other goodies to enjoy.
And as the ants devoured the good things he would yell at them,
They're from me because I love you, I love you, I love you!
Still the ants did not get the message.

But in this make-believe story the man had magical powers.
And he was able to transform himself into anything he wanted to be.
What he wanted to be should now seem quite obvious.
To communicate with the ants, he knew what he had to do:
Transform himself into one of them.

So, he did just that!
He became an ant and went to live among them.
He told the other ants about the goodness of a great man who hovered over them.
He told them how much that man loved them.

The other ants would obviously curious and asked,
How come you know so much about that man?
To which this special ant replied,
Because I am that man, I became one of you.
Only by becoming one of you could I communicate how much I care for you..
I needed to show you what I am really like.

Christmas Eve

Readings

Isaiah 9:2-7

Psalm 96

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-20

Prayer of the Week

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the rightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Notes

Christmas Day

Readings

Isaiah 52:7-10

Psalms 98

Hebrews 1:1-12

John 1:1-14

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you gave us your only Son to take on our human nature and to illumine the world with your light. By your grace adopt us as your children and enlighten us with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Christmas
means...

“Embodiment”

Notes

December 26

Feast of Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

Readings

2 Chronicles 24:17-22

Psalm 17:1-9, 15

Acts 6:8-7:2a, 51-60

Matthew 23:34-39

Prayer of the Day

We give you thanks, O Lord of glory, for the example of Stephen the first martyr, who looked to heaven and prayed for his persecutors. Grant that we may also pray for our enemies and seek forgiveness for those who hurt us, through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Incarnation= God showing up in flesh
(*carne*) and blood through the person of
Jesus—his birth, life, death,
resurrection, ascension, continuing
Advent, and Ultimate Appearing!

**Incarnation means
“Embodiment!”**

Notes

December 27

Feast of John, Apostle and Evangelist

Readings

Genesis 1:1-5, 26-31

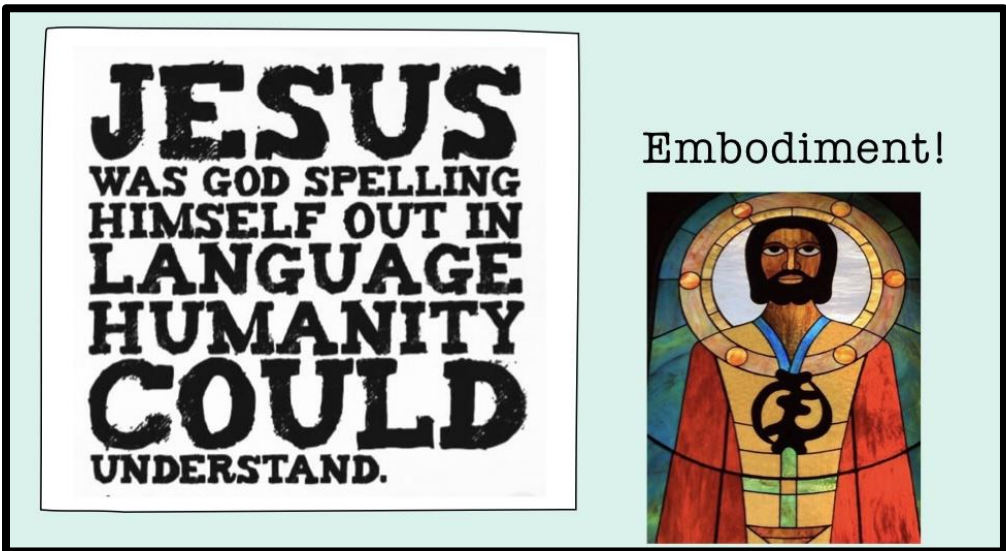
Psalm 116-12-19

1 John 1:1-2:2

John 21:20-25

Prayer of the Day

Merciful God, through John the apostle and evangelist you have revealed the mysteries of your Word made flesh. Let the brightness of your light shine on your church, so that all your people, instructed by the holy gospel, may walk in the light of your truth and attain eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Notes

December 28

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Readings

Jeremiah 31:15-17

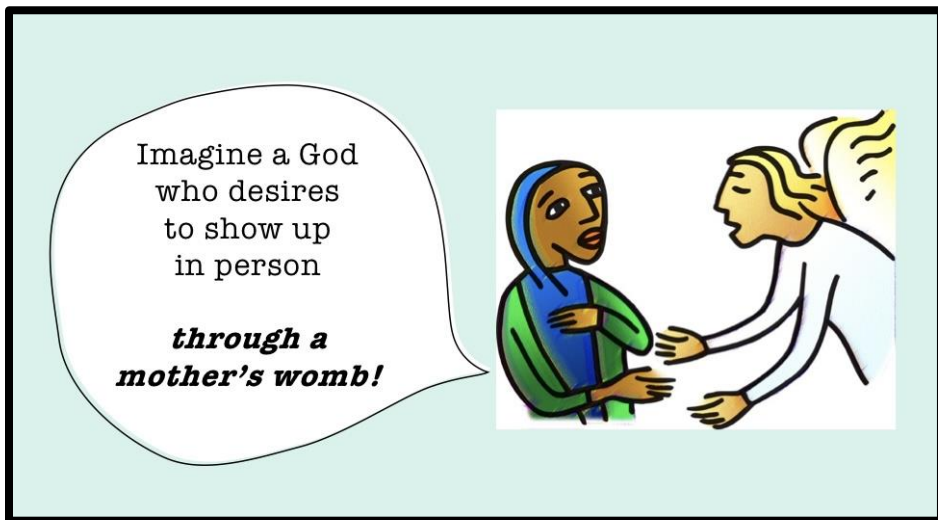
Psalm 124

1 Peter 4:12-19

Matthew 2:13-18

Prayer of the Day

We remember today, O God, the slaughter of the innocent children of Bethlehem by order of King Herod. Receive into the arms of your mercy all innocent victims. By your great mercy frustrate the design of evil tyrants and establish your rule of justice, love, and peace through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Notes

December 29

Readings

Isaiah 49:9-15

Psalms 148

Matthew 12:36-50

Prayer of the Week

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the rightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Imagine a
God who
loves
humanity

**and all
creation and
shows up
among the
animals!!!**



Notes

December 30

Readings

Proverbs 9:1-12

Psalms 148

2 Peter 3:8-15

Prayer of the Week

Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus' presence and in the last day wake to the rightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Imagine God
showing up

***in person
in a tiny
baby's body***

2,000 years ago!



Notes

December 31

First Sunday of Christmas

Readings

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

Psalm 148

Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:22-40

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share in the divine life of the one who came to share in our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Imagine Jesus bodily showing up today
through each person at Zion!



Notes

January 1

The Name of Jesus

Readings

Numbers 6:22-27

Psalm 8

Galatians 4:4-7

Luke 2:14-21

Prayer of the Week

Eternal Father, you gave your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be a sign of our salvation. Plant in every heart the love of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you. Amen.



Imagine Jesus showing up in the flesh
through the people of God at Zion!

Notes

January 2

Readings

Proverbs 1:1-7

Psalms 148

James 3:13-18

Prayer of the Week

Eternal Father, you gave your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be a sign of our salvation. Plant in every heart the love of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you. Amen.

Imagine Jesus
showing up
**in all his
distressing
disguises**
*as the
"least of these".*



Notes

January 3

Readings

Proverbs 1:20-33

Psalm 110

James 4:1-10

Prayer of the Week

Eternal Father, you gave your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be a sign of our salvation. Plant in every heart the love of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you. Amen.

Imagine Jesus
showing up
through

*one of our
meals today.*



Notes

January 4

Readings

Proverbs 3:1-12

Psalm 110

James 4:11-17

Prayer of the Week

Eternal Father, you gave your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be a sign of our salvation. Plant in every heart the love of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you. Amen.

Imagine a God

who desires
to show up bodily

*in and through
you!*



Notes

January 5

Readings

Proverbs 22:1-9

Psalm 110

Luke 6:27-31

Prayer of the Week

Eternal Father, you gave your incarnate Son the holy name of Jesus to be a sign of our salvation. Plant in every heart the love of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you. Amen.



Let us sing
this truth
into being!

Notes

January 6

Epiphany of Our Lord

Readings

Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12

Prayer of the Day

O God, on this day you revealed your Son to the nations by the leading of a star. Lead us now by faith to know your presence in our lives, and bring us at last to the full vision of your glory, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



**Where are the
surprising places
you are seeing
Jesus show up in
your life?**

**Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany
teach us to be on the look out
for Jesus in our world today!**

Notes