

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE GUIDE



The *JOY* Christmas Eve Service Guide contains *everything* you need (underscores, readings, tracks and Christmas carols) for about 22 minutes of your Christmas Eve worship or Christmas Sunday worship. This versatile service can be led with as little as a capable pianist and worship leader, or with a praise team, praise band and/or a full SATB or SAB choir (plus orchestral instruments with the instrumental edition.) If you don't have any musicians, lead the service with the stereo tracks, or even mix tracks with live performances.

Get as elaborate as you want. Do all the readings with one person or select different elders/deacons and/or members of the congregation for each reading (make sure the people you select have expression and are committed to practicing with the included demos.) Have a pianist or a full band lead the carols. I actually prefer the more intimate setting of a piano, acoustic guitar and perhaps a bass guitar.

My prayer is that this guide will help your people experience the true JOY of the season: the birth of Jesus.

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Ideas for using the *JOY* Service Guide:

>What you'll need to provide for your service:

1. Up to 4 narrators. One person can do all the narration or pick a different person for each narration. Burn a CD or email your narrators the MP3 vocal demo and MP3 track so they can practice their timing. *The key to the service guide is the uninterrupted music flow!*

2. Sermon. There's a slot for the pastor's sermon.

3. Alternate Scripture. The KJV version is provided here for the Scripture readings, but you may have a favorite translation you'd rather use. Try "The Message" version for a contemporary reading.

4. Kid's Choir or child soloist. As with all my service guides, I intend for them to sound great whether you're doing a full production or a simple version with piano/vocal. *Jesus Is His Name* is a kid's medley for kid's choir and praise team, but if you don't have the time or resources for a full kid's ensemble, pick a talented young soloist instead - they'll love the opportunity (and so will their parents!)

>Tips for using the *JOY* Service Guide:

1. Scarce musicians. It can be difficult for smaller churches to find musicians on Christmas Eve. Burn a CD of the underscores and vocal demos and play it in lieu of using musicians.

2. Keyboard player. The entire service can be conducted with a single, capable pianist. Have a keyboard player accompany the narration by playing the underscores under the narration. You will want to have a short rehearsal with the pianist and narrators to make sure their timing is perfect.

3. Change keys. Finale files are provided which will allow you to change the key if you own Finale software. However, *I do not recommend changing the keys as the underscores are designed to transition you from song to song in the keys I've selected.*

4. Logo. A Photoshop file and TIFF file is included of the "JOY" logo so you can reproduce it in your bulletin.

5. PowerPoint files. Standard definition PowerPoint files are provided for the songs. Widescreen blank slides are included if you want to build your own slides in that format.

6. It Came upon the Midnight Clear. I used the guitar version with male worship leader/female background vocalist for the demo, but I've also included the piano & 3 part vocals demo if you'd prefer to use that version.

7. Solos/Special Music. If you want a longer Christmas Eve service and have the musicians to pull it off, add a solo or choir special to the mix. You might include a favorite solo from one of your Christmas Sundays or a choir special from a cantata performed by a smaller ensemble if your full choir isn't available.

>Using Tracks:

If you plan on using tracks for your service, here's how it works. Instead of building your service and burning a CD with the individual tracks in order (which is fine if you want to do it that way,) use the "Combined" tracks. The "Combined" track folders are MP3s with songs and underscores that flow seamlessly one to the other. This way your worship will flow with minimal starting/stopping.

The "Stereo Tracks" and "Vocal Demos" folders contain all the songs and underscores as separate MP3s. Use these if you want more control over your service. Perhaps you want to perform the underscores live with narrators and a pianist, then sing with tracks, or vice-versa. Because Underscore 4 is so short (and is basically the intro to *Joy to the World* repeated twice) I haven't included it as a stand alone track.

Powerpoint and some worship projection software will automatically play MP3s. Or try playing the tracks from an iPod or other MP3 player. Whether you go digital or use a burned CDROM to play the tracks, **please make sure you test your setup with a full run-through!**

>How to use this service guide:

Each part of the *JOY* Service Guide is on one page. Print out all the pages for all your narrators so they can follow along and mark their parts.

The final page is a one page, at-a-glance overview so those involved can see the entire program.

If you're using the MP3 underscores, make sure the narrators have a chance to practice with them. Feel free to burn a CD or email the MP3s to them so they can make sure their narrations fit the music. The keyboard underscores are composed with repeats making them more flexible.

Dead space kills a worship service! Both the keyboard underscores and MP3 underscores are designed to help you flow directly into the next song. If you're using the MP3s, wait until you hear the final chord - the chord will ring out for a few seconds giving you time to start playing the introduction to the next song.