

Psalm Readings for Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, 2004-2005

Advent 1

Psalm 122

(Note: Use three readers: a child, a youth, and an adult at the front of the sanctuary; can also be done as a congregational responsive reading.)

CHILD: *I* was glad when they said to *me*, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"

YOUTH: *I* was glad when they said to *me*, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"

ADULT: *I* was glad when they said to *me*, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"

CHILD: Standing on holy ground;

YOUTH: bound firmly together;

ADULT: we give thanks to the name of the Lord!

ALL: *And together we will pray for peace.*

CHILD: peace within these walls;

YOUTH: peace within our family and friends;

ADULT: peace within ourselves.

ALL: *In the house of God, we give thanks to the name of the Lord!*

Advent 2

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

(Note: A solo reader will read the text. A quartet will respond at the appropriate time with #101 "Alleluia." Although this is clearly a coronation Psalm, it is not hard to project one step farther to these words being descriptive of the coming Messiah.)

READER: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things!
Blessed be God's glorious name forever,

and may the glory of the Lord fill the whole earth.

RESPONSE: "Alleluia" 101

READER: And in all the earth, the one who comes will
judge with righteousness,
extend justice to the poor,
and bring deliverance to the needy.

RESPONSE: "Alleluia"101

READER: And in all the earth, the one who comes will
be like the rain that falls on the mown grass
and like the showers that water the earth.

RESPONSE: "Alleluia"101

READER: Righteousness will flourish and peace will abound.
Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel!
May God's glory fill the whole earth!
Amen and Amen.

Hymn: Immediately following the litany, the entire congregation joins the quartet to sing "Alleluia" (#101).

Advent 3

Psalm 146:5-10 and Luke 1:47-55

*(Note: The words of Mary's Magnificat will be interspersed with the Psalm.
The text can be read by two solo voices or by the congregation and a "Mary.")*

Congregation: Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the Lord their God.

*Mary: My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.*

Congregation: Our hope is in the one who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them.

*Mary: For the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is God's name.*

Congregation: Our hope is in the one

who keeps faith forever;
who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry;
who sets the prisoners free;
who opens the eyes of the blind;
who lifts up those who are bowed down;
who loves the righteous;
who watches over the strangers;
who upholds the orphans and the widow.

*Mary: The Lord has shown mercy from generation to generation;
lifted up the lowly and filled the hungry with good things.*

Congregation: The way of the wicked God brings to ruin.

*Mary: The Lord has shown strength with his arm;
has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;
brought down the powerful from their thrones;
and sent the rich away empty.*

Congregation: The Lord will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.

*Mary: God has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and Sarah and to their descendants forever.*

Congregation: Praise the Lord!

Advent 4

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

(Note: This Psalm lends itself to a more traditional leader/congregation response.)

Leader: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth!

*Congregation: Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.*

Leader: Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one whom you made strong for yourself.

*Congregation: Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.*

Leader: We will never turn back from you;
give us life, and we will call upon your name.

*Congregation: Restore us, O God;
Let your face shine, that we may be saved.*

Christmas

Psalm 148

(Note: The words of the psalm will be interspersed with an instrumental setting of the Christmas hymn #213 "Let all together praise our God." Consider using a brass or string ensemble if available, but if not, an organist or pianist will be able to deliver a praise-filled rendition. The litany is designed to be read by a team of dramatic readers, who can rehearse with the instrumentalist(s).

All Readers: Praise the Lord!

Reader 1: Praise the Lord from the heavens!

Reader 2: Praise the Lord in the heights!

Reader 3: Praise the Lord, all you angels!

Reader 4: Praise the Lord, all you hosts!

One verse of Hymn #213 "Let all together praise our God"

Reader 1: Praise the Lord, sun and moon!

Reader 2: Praise the Lord, all you shining stars!

Reader 3: Praise the Lord, you highest heavens!

Reader 4: Praise the Lord, you waters above the heavens!

One verse of Hymn #213

Reader 1: Praise the Lord from the earth...

Reader 2: sea monsters and all deeps;

Reader 3: fire and hail;
Reader 4: snow and frost;
Reader 1: mountains and all hills;
Reader 2: fruit trees and all cedars;
Reader 3: wild animals and all cattle;
Reader 4: creeping things and flying birds!

One verse of Hymn #213

Reader 1: Kings of the earth and all people;
Reader 2: Princes and all rulers of the earth;
Reader 3: Young men and women alike;
Reader 4: Old and young together!
All Readers: Let them praise the name of the Lord!

One verse of Hymn #213

All Readers: Let them praise the name of the Lord!
Reader 1: For the name of the Lord is exalted!
Reader 2: God's glory is above earth and heaven!
Reader 3: *(with great deliberation)*
God has raised up a horn for the faithful!

One verse of #213 begins at this point, and readers finish the litany while the music is being played. Readers increase the volume of each line.

Reader 4: Praise the Lord!
Readers 4,1: Praise the Lord!
Readers 4,1,2: Praise the Lord!
Readers 4,1,2,3: Praise the Lord!

Epiphany

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14

(Note: Since verses 1-7 of Psalm 72 were also used in Advent 2, the emphasis here is more on the new verses -- 10-14. which fit well with Epiphany themes. If your congregation has someone who knows sign language, this passage would lend itself well to interpretation through sign language. If not, a solo voice can read the litany expressively. Consider prompting families and children ahead of time to bring brightly wrapped gifts to the service. The gifts could be toys or clothes for children in the community who might be lacking gifts at this season. See further instructions below.)

Reader: Like rain that falls on newly mown grass
and showers that water the earth,
righteousness will flourish and peace will abound.

(Children begin to bring gifts to the front at this point.)

The kings of Tarshish render tribute to the King of Kings.
The kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts,
and all kings fall down before the Prince of Peace.

(Reader waits until all children have come with gifts and have returned to seats.)

For God delivers the needy,
takes pity on the weak, and saves the poor.
From oppression and violence God redeems their lives,
and precious is their blood in God's sight.