

# ECHOES



## TEACHER SCORE

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# ABOUT THIS WORSHIP SERVICE

Welcome to Echoes of the Manger. The dictionary tells us that an echo is a repetition of sound. This Christmas worship service will serve as a tool that will enable us to repeat sounds that have been heard from the beginning of time. They are sounds that come from Eden, from the mouths of the prophets, from the fields of Bethlehem, and from those who lived at the time of Jesus. They all echo the same sound. It says God Loves Us!

This service is divided into five parts:

**Part 1: ECHOES OF PROMISE**

**Part 2: ECHOES OF BETHLEHEM**

**Part 3: ECHOES FROM THE FIELDS**

**Part 4: ECHOES OF JESUS' FRIENDS**

**Part 5: ECHOES OF GOD'S LOVE**

Each part is introduced by a short poem recited by the little children.

## RECITATIONS AND NARRATIONS

Although this service is written with two narrators, feel free to divide up those spoken parts as you wish. Sections marked RECITATION usually contain Scripture verses to be recited.

## SONGS

In keeping with the theme of echoes, the songs all echo responses from other countries and other eras. The theme song, *Echoes of the Manger*, serves as both the processional and recessional. If using the accompaniment CD, the entire song is played through once before the children begin singing. This was done purposely to give more children an opportunity to already be in the sanctuary when they begin singing. When used as the recessional, you might suggest that the congregation joins in the singing of *Silent Night*.

## BANNERS

Banner patterns have been provided for five chancel banners. As each new part is introduced in the service, another banner is brought to the forefront. Place banners as close to one another as possible. When all five banners are displayed, they produce a large mural depicting the theme of this service.



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# Echoes of the Manger

**Processional:** (All children)

(Note: If using the Accompaniment CD there is an additional set of verses/refrain giving the children time to enter and get positioned in front of church. Begin singing on 2<sup>nd</sup> time through.)

## *Echoes of the Manger*

1. Hear the echoes of the manger  
Calling out in harmony  
They resound the wondrous story  
Of God's love for you and me.

2. Listen to their sounds of gladness;  
Melodies that rise and strain  
Deep within the hearts of people  
Echoing the glad refrain.

## **REFRAIN**

Gloria, (Gloria), Gloria, (Gloria),  
Praises voicing, heav'n rejoicing, Jesus Christ is born.  
Gloria, (Gloria), Gloria, (Gloria),  
Praises voicing, heav'n rejoicing, Jesus Christ is born.

## **Invocation**

**Responsive Reading:** (Psalm 71)

**Pastor:** As for me, I will always have hope; I will praise you more and more.

**Congregation:** My mouth will tell of your righteousness, of your salvation all day long, though I know not its measure.

**Pastor:** I will come and proclaim your mighty acts, O sovereign Lord; I will proclaim your righteousness, yours alone.

**Children:** Since my youth, O God, you have taught me, and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.

**Adults:** Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me, O God, till I declare your power to the next generation, your might to all who are to come.

**Pastor:** Your righteousness reaches to the skies, O God, you have done great things. Who, O God, is like you?

**Children:** I will praise you with the harp for your faithfulness, O my God;

**Adults:** I will sing praise to you with the lyre, O Holy One of Israel.

**All:** My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you—I whom you have redeemed. My tongue will tell of your righteous acts all day long.

## **Christmas Prayer**

Gracious Lord God, we gather at this most festive time to echo your praises. For placing your Son in that lowly manger bed we give you thanks. For the grace you showered on us at Calvary, we give you thanks. For the fire that your Spirit has kindled within our souls, we give you thanks. May we take our children's message with us throughout the New Year. We pray in the name of Jesus, our Friend, our Brother, and our Savior. Amen.

## **Congregation Song**

**Narrator 1:** There is an amazing wonder that God has allowed to take place in our world. This wonder is something that all of us have experienced. It is a marvel that is produced by sound waves reflecting off objects like walls or mountains.

**Narrator 2:** This wonder only lasts for a moment since it travels at more than 1,000 feet a second.

**Narrator 1:** Sometimes this wonder can be a nuisance if it happens in a theater or concert hall, and great measures are taken to avoid it in recording studios.

**Narrator 2:** Sometimes it can also work for our good. With it, sailors can determine the direction and distance of cliffs in foggy weather. It can even be used to find oil deposits or schools of fish.

**Narrator 1:** Perhaps by now you've guessed that this is the marvelous wonder of ECHOES.

**Narrator 2:** Tonight we will listen to some echoes. These aren't echoes of sound, but rather echoes of a very special message—the message of GOD'S SAVING LOVE.

**Narrator 1:** The echoes of God's saving love have been heard for thousands of years but the message they bring is just as fresh and beautiful today as it was at the beginning of time.

**Narrator 2:** Listen to the words of God as He echoes this message to each one of us. Listen to the echo of these three unforgettable words: "I love you".

**Narrator 1:** And listen to our words tonight as we re-echo our love for Him in our recitations and in each traditional Christmas carol we sing.

## **Part 1: Echoes of Promise**

(Banner picture: Scroll)

**Little Children:**      Echoes of the manger  
                                 Hear the message grow  
                                 That the prophets told us  
                                 Many years ago.

**Narrator 2:** Sometimes echoes are frightening, like the echoes that thunder makes. A frightening echo was heard in the Garden of Eden after man sinned. He was now separated from God, and his perfect relationship with his loving Father was destroyed. And the saddest part of all was that this affected not only Adam and Eve, but it echoes through all people who have been born after that time.

**Narrator 1:** Imagine how God must have been grieved when he saw Adam and Eve reject His love.

**Narrator 2:** But God's love rose high above man's sin as He announced to Adam and Eve:

**Recitation:** "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." Genesis 3 verse 15.

**Narrator 1:** God's love caused Him to work out a solution to the problem man had made. God chose to send His Son Jesus, to bear the punishment that sin had caused.

**Narrator 2:** These echoes of a promised Savior were sounded by God's people for nearly 4000 years as they waited for the Messiah to come.

**Recitation:** Moses echoed Jesus' coming when he wrote, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to Him." Deuteronomy 18:15.

**Recitation:** Isaiah echoed Jesus' coming when he said, "For to us a child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6.

**Recitation:** Even Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, sounded the echo when he wrote, "The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up to David a righteous Branch." Jeremiah 23:5. Jesus was that branch.

**Recitation:** Daniel also echoed a prophecy about the coming Savior when he wrote, "He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped Him. . . And His kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." Daniel 7:14.

**Recitation:** Even Job, in all his grief and misery, echoes these unforgettable words of the hope he had, "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God; I myself will see Him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" Job 19:25.

**Narrator 1:** And so the echo continues as God's people waited for the Promised One who would bring them the hope of salvation.

**Narrator:** Our songs tonight are all echoes from the past, written by God's people in many different places and at many different times. At this very moment families around the world are

sharing the story of Christmas, echoing the message of God's love. Listen now as we hear this message as it was sung in Scandinavian homes many years ago.

**Song:** (Middle Grades)

***The Happy Christmas Comes Once More***

The happy Christmas comes once more,  
The heavenly Guest is at the door,  
The blessed words, the shepherd's thrill,  
The joyous tidings of good will.  
To David's city let us fly,  
Where angels sing beneath the sky,  
Through plain and village pressing near,  
And news from God with shepherds hear.

Oh, let us go with quiet mind,  
The gentle Babe with shepherds find,  
To gaze on Him who gladdens them,  
The loveliest flower on Jesse's stem.

Come, Jesus, glorious heavenly Guest,  
Keep Thine own Christmas in our breast;  
Then David's harp-string, hushed so long,  
Shall swell our jubilee of song.

## **Part 2: Echoes of Bethlehem**

(Banner picture: Bethlehem)

**Little Children:** Echoes of the manger  
Hear their precious call  
Tell us of a baby  
In a cattle stall.

**Narrator 1:** God had chosen the proper time for his gift of love to be opened to the world as we hear it in Luke 2.

**Recitation:** "In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone went to his own town to register."

**Narrator 2:** God chose a special man to be the earthly father for his Son.

**Recitation:** "So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David."

**Narrator 1:** God had carefully chosen the young lady to be the mother of his Son.

**Recitation:** “He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.”

**Narrator 2:** God even chose the ideal time and place for this birth.

**Recitation:** “While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

**Narrator:** The beautiful message of the birth of Jesus is echoed in this traditional carol from Austria.

**Song:** (Middle Grades)

***Above on the Mountain***

Above on the mountain the breezes blow mild,  
Where Mary the mother is rocking her child.  
She rocks Him so gently and sweetly doth sing:  
“O rest now, my Treasure, my Son, and my King.”

**REFRAIN**

Di-ri-di-ri, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah,  
Di-ri-di-ri, hallelujah, hallelujah, di-ri-di-ri.

The Baby awakens and looks to the sky  
Where angels are singing their song from on high:  
“All praise to the Almighty Father in heav’n  
And to all the earth may His great peace be giv’n.”

**REFRAIN**

Above on the mountain the breezes blow mild,  
Where Mary the mother is rocking her child.  
She rocks him so gently and sweetly doth sing:  
“O rest now, my Treasure, my Son, and my King.

**REFRAIN**

**(Parts 3 and 4 have been removed for this sample)**

## **Part 5: Echoes of God's Great Love**

(Banner picture: Cross)

**Little Children:** Echoes of the manger  
Coming from above  
Always tell the message  
Of God's gracious love.

**Narrator 1:** Love!

**Recitation:** Uncompromising love!

**Recitation:** Love that asks nothing in return!

**Recitation:** Sacrificial love!

**Recitation:** Unchanging love!

**Recitation:** Unending love!

**Narrator 2:** As we follow God's plan from creation to today we cannot help but hear one word echoing again and again. That word is **love!**

**Recitation:** Love created a beautiful place for God's special friends: Adam and Eve.

**Recitation:** Love gave them the hope of everlasting life—even after they willingly sinned against God.

**Recitation:** Love continued to echo throughout the Old Testament as God prepared the proper time and place for the ultimate display of this love.

**Recitation:** Love caused the almighty God to humble himself to be born in a manger to a young frightened girl.

**Recitation:** Love caused Jesus to willingly die on the cross for your sins and mine.

**Recitation:** Love showed us that just as Jesus rose from the dead, so also will we rise again.

**Recitation:** Love is the reason that our Savior is at this very moment preparing a beautiful home in heaven for you and for me.

**Narrator 1:** Won't you join us as we tell this most wonderful message from the Bible which shows us this great love. May these words echo and re-echo in our hearts each and every day.

**Men:** Jeremiah 31 verse 3, "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving kindness."

**Women:** Ephesians 2 verses 4 and 5, "Because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ."

**Children:** First John 3 verse 1, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God."

**Everyone:** John 3 verse 16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that



whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

### **Offering, Prayers, Benediction**

### **Congregation Song**

**Pastor:** But these echoes of the manger do little if we keep them to ourselves. Echoes are meant to be heard not once but again and again.

**Lower Grades:** Paul told Timothy, “Do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord.”

**Upper Grades:** Peter said, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

**Pastor:** Jesus once told a friend:

**Pastor and All Children:** “Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you.”

**Recessional:** (All Children)

### ***Echoes of the Manger and Silent Night***

(Congregation may join in on Silent Night)

1) Hear the echoes of the manger  
Calling out in harmony.  
They resound the wondrous story  
Of God's love for you and me.

2) Listen to their sounds of gladness  
Melodies that rise and strain;  
Deep within the hearts of people  
Echoing the glad refrain.

3) Come ye faithful, raise the anthem  
Tidings of great joy we bring.  
Heav'nly hosts sing alleluia;  
Hark, the herald angels sing.

4) O rejoice ye Christians loudly;  
God's joy to the world has come.  
Of the Father's love begotten,  
Come, adore the blessed One.

### **REFRAIN**

Gloria, (Gloria), Gloria, (Gloria),  
Praises voicing, heav'n rejoicing, Jesus Christ is born.  
Gloria, (Gloria), Gloria, (Gloria),  
Praises voicing, heav'n rejoicing, Jesus Christ is born.

1) Silent night, holy night,  
All is calm, all is bright  
Round yon virgin mother and Child.  
Holy Infant so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

3) Silent night, holy night  
Shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia;  
Christ the Savior is born!  
Christ the Savior is born!

2) Stille nacht, Heilige nacht!  
Alles schläft, einsam wacht,  
Nur das traute hochheilige Paar  
Holder Knabe im lockigen Haar,  
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!  
Schlaf in himmlischer Ruh!

4) Silent night, holy night,  
Son of God, loves pure light  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth,  
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.