
Engage

Dear Lord, give us boldness and love to bring someone to encounter You this season. Open doors, soften hearts, and use our simple invitation to draw someone closer to You. Fill us with courage, love, compassion, and the joy of Your presence. In Jesus' Name, Amen.





WELCOME

Welcome is the first “W” in a Cell Group (CG) session. Each person may be going through many daily situations leading up to a CG session. Hence, it is good to bring the CG with a practice of releasing the daily situations we each may be going through. CGs are encouraged to get creative about Icebreakers and/or activities that help its members to be present with one another. Here are some suggestions to shake things up a little and inject some fun and freshness into how we do this.

Suggested Icebreaker Activity/Questions

For CGs with new visitors

- Take a moment to think and then share some outrageous examples of things in pairs e.g. wings, chopsticks, twins, couple, etc.

For CGs with existing members

- Share your favourite Bible verse or go-to song for worship.



Photo by Nati on Pexels



SERMON SUMMARY

Note to Word Facilitator: The sermon notes below is a summary of the sermon. You may choose to further summarize it according to the needs and context of your CG members. The goal is not just to go through it “verbatim” but to prepare well, allowing members to recall and engage the message in the best possible way.

Advent #4: An Invitation to Worship

Pr Janan Goh

Matthew 2:1-13

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, ‘Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him.’

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ‘In Bethlehem in Judea,’ they replied, ‘for this is what the prophet has written:

“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, ‘Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.’

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child and His mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill Him.'

Introduction

The last sermon of the Advent series explores the 3 sets of 2s found in the same set of Scripture covered in the previous sermon but with a focus on the aspect of a cosmic invitation to worship.

1. INVITATION: TWO RESPONSES to worship *Matthew 2:2, 8, 13*

Two cosmic worship invitations were sent out - one was to the Magi and the other one to King Herod. Both used the same words *"to worship"*. Both professed the same intention but had entirely different motives. The first (the Magi) had pure motives to worship and when they found Jesus after their long and treacherous travel, bowed down and worshipped Him. On the other hand, King Herod paid lip service while hiding his true motive to kill Jesus. He treated the child Jesus without the respect He deserves.

We congregate to worship Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords weekly. It is important to self check our motives to ensure they are genuine. Is Jesus our King or is He just a Child? If He is truly our King, let us come before Him fully devoted in our weekly Celebrations and treat Him with the respect He deserves.

2. EXPERIENCE: The TWO TREASURES in worship *Matthew 2:9-11*

Worship is not just the WHAT, it is more about the WHO. Gold, frankincense and myrrh are the WHATs that signify Christ royalty, divinity and burial. The second hidden treasure is the WHO. The single most used word in this weekend's passage of Scripture was "they". "They" referred to the magi and was mentioned 7 times in just 3 lines of verses.

The ultimate Worship experience is the JOY of discovering the ONE THING:

- a. "WHO" encounters "WHO I belong to"
- b. The "WHAT" reflects our heart of worship.

Our encounter with Jesus is the most precious moment and we are the most precious treasure to Him. Let us come before Him as we are.

3. **THEREAFTER: The TWO DREAMS after worship** *Matthew 2:12-13; Romans 8:28*

There were two dreams that provided direction after the great worship experience. The first dream was to *"Go back, another way"*: *"After having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route."* And the second dream was the angelic dream to *"Flee to Egypt, Now"*: *When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, "Get up," he said, "take the child and His mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill Him."*

The lesson here is that Worship (Devotion) precedes the Word (Direction). God will speak to us when our hearts are devoted to Him in worship. God releases His Word to someone fully surrendered to Jesus.

Also, worship does not always lead to a life free of challenges and hardships. Sometimes we may not understand why bad things happen to good people but God's purpose will prevail. His will is always good. We draw comfort that "All things work together for the good of those who love Him" (Romans 8:28) and that "Good is not always God's will but God's will is always good" (Watchman Nee).

Conclusion

The worship invitation has already been sent. RSVP NOW.

Series' Sum Up

DUMCs's Advent theme for this year is ***The Invitation*** which is God's divine initiative. He invites humanity into a relationship with Christ through His incarnation. The Advent series commences with the "***Invitation to Make Room***". Like the bustle and busyness of Bethlehem of those days, our lives can be so full that there is no room left for God's presence and His purposes. We need to clear our hearts and lives of distraction. To open our hearts to God and others so that we can begin to reorder our priorities and extend the invitation.

In the second sermon, we see that God chose ordinary people like the shepherds and believers today to share simple testimonies and to make connections. God wants to use us, just as He used the shepherds to share the love of Christ with those who will believe in Jesus. Our God would meet ordinary people in ordinary moments and extend His extraordinary grace. ***So, where is our joy?***

The third sermon zooms in on the Magi who were sincere seekers of truth. They were convinced by the revelation that Jesus is the prophesied Messiah, who would be king of His people. There are many people in the world in search of truth. As Christians, we know that truth is found in the person of Jesus Christ. Many in the world are searching for the truth. ***Are we boldly sharing the invitation to know Christ?***

It comes full circle in the final sermon with the cosmic invitation to worship Jesus, our King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Our encounter with Jesus is the most precious moment and we are the most precious treasure to Him. Our response needs to be one of love and gratitude for the graciousness He has shown us despite our sinful unworthiness. God will speak to us when our hearts are devoted to Him in worship. The worship invitation has been sent. ***What is our response?***



APPLICATION

Note to Word facilitator:

As you prepare for this session, this is a great time to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you to use the questions efficiently. You can select, modify or entirely create your own questions, according to the needs of your CG, especially if you feel that there are too many questions than required for the allocated time. The questions below are crafted with a certain flow in mind. You could use these towards the end or insert them in between your own sermon reflection and summary.



Photo by Julia Edbrooke on Unsplash

Suggested Word Introductory Questions

- Is Jesus “King” or “Child” to you? How would you approach Him in worship this Christmas?
- Digital detox time: Prepare your RSVP response to the cosmic invitation to

worship Jesus. (Notes to facilitators: This is an opportunity for the CG to get creative on paper. So preparing necessary stationery and props helps.)

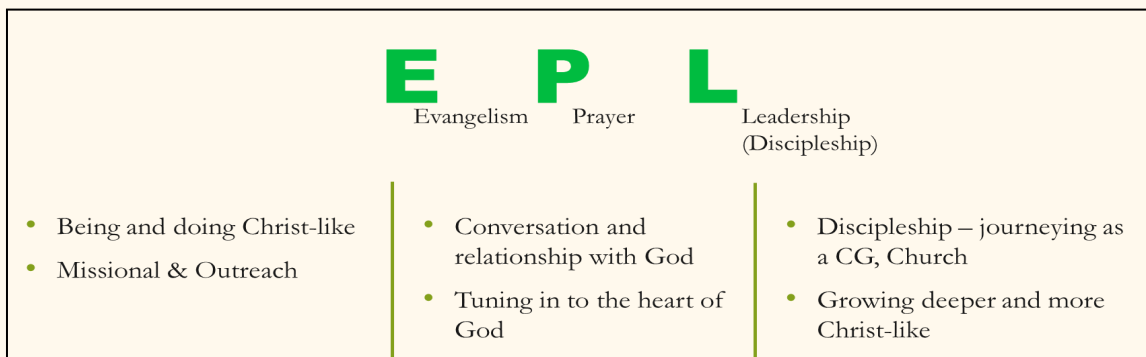
Suggested Questions linked to the Sermon:

- Share moment(s) of difficult struggle in the past where looking back, God has willed it for good.
- Why would Jesus consider you a “treasure”? How could you help others realise this too, especially those who have yet to know Christ?
- “Worship precedes Word”. Share an experience where the worship of God reveals a direction for your life.

EPL Emphasis:

A question or activity to help anchor our focus back on [E]vangelism/[P]rayer/[L]ead

- One Bring One (OBO) Challenge: If you missed out on someone coming to the Christmas Celebrations with you, don't give up. There are still many opportunities to invite people to church, i.e. our Watchnight Service, the first Sunday of 2026, After7, Sparkz Talks, etc.



The Engage team will be taking a break for one weekend (27-28 Dec 2025). The next Engage issue will be published on 6 Jan 2026 based on the sermon that will be preached on 3-4 Jan 2026.

Also, if you are exploring an area to serve in 2026, the *Engage* team welcomes new writers and observers. If you are interested, please email or approach one of us:

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SERMON REFLECTION



Photo by BoliviaInteligente on Unsplash

It is the end of the year again. And as with all year ends, I naturally settle into a reflective mood. It is my tendency to dwell mostly on regrets - how I could have shown up better as a spouse and a father, how I could have been more patient and tactful in helping my team and peers at work better understand some of the difficult organisational decisions the leadership had to make.

While it may be justified to discipline my boys, it could have been done with a great deal less shouting and harsh words. Though decisions had to be made in the best interest of the company, I should have done more to cushion the blow.

Pastor Janan asked if I am genuine in coming before Jesus, acknowledging Him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. If I am truly honest with myself, a part of me just isn't fully present during Celebration even though I made the genuine decision to come before Him in devoted worship. An inner part - a hollow part - dwells in this never ending loop of failures whilst earnest praise and adoration escapes from my lips, joining the harmonious chorus of worship reaching to the heavens.

I draw strength and a hearty measure of comfort from being reminded that I am His precious treasure. Jesus went out of His way to find and rescue me - one lost sheep out of the 100s and 1000s of others, unworthy as I am. The very act of contemplating turning in repentance and towards worship of His holiness is less so due to a human resolve and more a testament of God's Spirit quickening my heart. And it is precisely these moments where I have fallen short that I am grateful for the graciousness shown by our Father. His quiet whisper of "*I love you*" and "*You are my precious treasure*" transcends all of life and its present troubles. It echoes to eternity.

Thank you Father. Thank you Lord Jesus.

Contributed by Darren Lim



MISSIONAL

Note to CGL: Inspire and encourage the Cell Group members to participate in the activity suggested below (from our CrossFields, Missions department) together to cultivate a culture of being a missional church.



CrossFields
Thailand



Vision
To engage, equip, empower, and envision the sick, poor, needy, vulnerable, and oppressed to live in dignity and hope through Christ.



Kian Leong & Su Foong



Ministry
Providing shelter and support for the sick and refugees, empowering youth, developing social enterprises, and nurturing faith through house churches.



Pray for
Health and safety for the team and residents, the power of the Holy Spirit in ministry, provision of land, wisdom in training refugees, and grace in transition and succession.

SUPPORT

dumc.my/missions_response

Behind every mission story are hands that serve and hearts that love.

Meet our field labourers, people faithfully serving where God has called them.

Be inspired and find out how you can partner in the work on the field.

tinyurl.com/fieldlabourers



PRAYER

Note to CGL: You (or someone you assign this portion to), may lead by praying OR reading these prayers together as a CG during worship.

Advent Prayer - Week #4 (Candle of Love)

Leader: Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for Your love for us.

CG: Thank You for sending Your Son, that we might live through Him.

Leader: We stand in awe of the Incarnation.

CG: God becoming man and dwelling among us.

Leader: May Your love transform us from the inside out.

CG: May Your love guide our words and actions.

Leader: By Your Spirit, help us to love one another as Your children.

CG: Teach us to forgive one another as we have been forgiven.

Leader: May we love You with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength;

CG: And love our neighbours as ourselves.

Together: With grateful hearts we offer this prayer to You. Amen.

The Engage Writing Team wishes you, our readers:

BLESSED CHRISTMAS & A JOYOUS NEW YEAR
