

me, O Come Emmanuel

come, O come Emmanuel  
 come, O come Emmanuel  
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# SPACES

## PRAYER STATIONS

Prayer stations are physical spaces. They invite us to meditate, reflect, pray, confess, give thanks, create, craft, act, or rest. They can be used one at a time or in sets, by individuals or groups. They can fill an entire room or just a corner.

When we use prayer stations, we make a physical space for God. We are saying, "Welcome. Be here; be real among us." Prayer stations make room for God physically as a reminder of how we make room for God in our lives. The interactive nature of prayer stations forces us to remember that worship is more than singing, prayer is more than words, and God desires more than belief. In the world, God makes every effort to interact with us through all of our senses. Prayer stations invite us to use more than our minds and our lips.

The following prayer stations could be set up as part of a group gathering during Advent or for individual use in a small corner of a room.

# TO PRAY

SALLY CHAMBERS

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To begin, invite participants to sit quietly for a few minutes, to close their eyes, and to breathe deeply as they come into the presence of God. Then invite them to move from one prayer station to the next, following the instructions at each station.

## ADVENT STATION 1: YOUR KINGDOM COME

### SUPPLIES

- > copies of the instructions
- > copies of Revelation 21:3–4
- > news stories cut from last week's newspapers, news magazines, or web articles
- > index cards, scissors, glue, pens, tape
- > Write on a sheet of poster board "Your Kingdom Come Among Us," and display it in the station.

### Instructions:

Advent and Christmas are times when we reflect on the coming of God's kingdom and the incarnation. *Incarnation* is a fancy word that describes how God became human in Jesus Christ. *Incarnation* is the place where the physical (earth) and the spiritual (heaven) intersect. Through the incarnation, God inaugurated the coming of God's kingdom. During Advent, we look toward the time when God's kingdom will come, and heaven and earth will be one.

What will the world be like when God's kingdom comes? Read Revelation 21:3–4. We are invited to make this description a reality in our present, to help God bring more heaven to earth.

Consider the stories in the news. Which ones stand out to you? Which ones seem dark and hopeless? Which ones could use a little more heaven on earth? Where in the news do you see the kingdom of God coming alive?

Cut words out of a news article, and glue them on an index card to fashion a prayer. (Write in some of the words, if necessary.) You might create a prayer for hope in hopeless situations, peace instead of fear, light in the darkness, or beauty in the midst of ugliness.

Tape your card to the poster as you pray, "Your Kingdom Come."

## ADVENT STATION 2: ADVENT PRAYERS

### SUPPLIES

- > copies of the lyrics to two or three Advent (not Christmas) carols, such as, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!" or "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"
- > copies of the instructions
- > paper, pens, colored pencils, markers
- > "Post It" notes

### Instructions:

'Tis the season to sing carols! Everywhere we go this time of year, we hear holiday music playing. Many of us sing along. Have you reflected on the words of the songs the world sings at Christmas?

Choose one of the Advent carols. Read it to yourself three times.

On a piece of paper, write the word or phrase that stands out to you. Draw a circle around it. Then write around the circle every word, object, name, or feeling



that comes to mind when you think about that word or phrase. Feel free to use markers or pencils to color or doodle around the words as you brainstorm.

Next, ask what God might be saying to you through this word or phrase. Is it a word of hope or encouragement? Is it something you need or want? Is it a reminder or a prayer?

Finally, craft a short, simple prayer for Advent that comes out of your time of reflection. Write the prayer on a sticky note. Take the sticky note home with you, and put it somewhere you will see it regularly during Advent.

### ADVENT/CHRISTMAS STATION 3: GIFTS

#### SUPPLIES

- > a small crèche or manger
- > copies of the instructions
- > copies of Luke 2:1-7 and Matthew 2:11
- > squares of paper
- > pens, colored pencils, markers, crayons

#### Instructions:

Read the familiar Christmas story as told in Luke and Matthew.

'Tis the season for giving gifts. During Advent, we often consider what gifts to give and what gifts we hope to receive. What gift would you would give to Jesus? What could he use? What would bring him joy? The gifts of the Magi were both physical and symbolic. What symbolic gift would you give him?

Draw or color on a square of paper the gift you would like to offer Jesus. Use words to write why you would give this present. Then place in the crèche the square you have created, your gift to Jesus. <

**Sally Chambers** lives in Nashville, Tennessee, and is excited to carve out sacred spaces in her new home with her soon-to-be husband.



### 30 NEXT DAY STRETCH

- + Decide how you will use the prayer stations (by yourself, with your family, with your youth group or congregation) to help you focus on Christ during the hustle and bustle of the season.
- + Create your own Advent/Christmas prayer station as a gift for your family or youth group.