
FREE WORKSHOP
From LONGING to WONDER
Experiencing a Moment in the Advent Story

STARTING MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30

Bringing Advent to Life is here to help us

- slow down
- interact with God about what the coming of Jesus meant then
- and what it means in my life here and now, today

TONIGHT

A taste of how we experience a passage

1

Study it

Look at the historical and cultural details.

2

Meditate and enter in

See what stands out to you and savor the text.

STUDY

The birth of Christ is very much about underdogs

The have-nots of society, the marginalized, the outsiders

POLL

When, if ever, have you felt like the “underdog”?

- **A** In my family
- **B** At my job
- **C** Among friends
- **D** In sports or academics
- **E** Other (type in the chat)

THE WHOLE STORY

IT BEGINS

with a young couple who had sunk to the lowest rung of the ladder.

IT ENDS

with that same couple as refugees in a strange land, complete outsiders.

> *Tonight: how God included underdogs in the middle of the story.*



Hearing it with fresh ears

Tonight we read from The Message. On your own, use the Bible translation you’re most comfortable with.

LUKE 2:8

8 There were shepherds camping in the neighborhood. They had set night watches over their sheep.

SHEPHERDS AS UNDERDOGS

Shepherds in first-century Palestine

were poor	were labeled “unclean” by the rabbis, like lepers	were lowly and uneducated, the bottom of society

> *Yet they were the first to hear of Jesus’ birth.*

LUKE 2:9–12

9 Suddenly, God’s angel stood among them and God’s glory blazed around them. They were terrified. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid. I’m here to announce a great and joyful event that is meant for everybody, worldwide: A Savior has just been born in David’s town, a Savior who is Messiah and Master. This is what you’re to look for: a baby wrapped in a blanket and lying in a manger.”

SHEPHERDS AS UNDERDOGS

Why were the shepherds terrified?

THE ANGEL

The angel of the Lord appeared in glory.

THE MISSION

Go visit this Messiah. *What?*

> *Any decent Messiah would reject unclean shepherds. They wouldn't be welcome.*

ONE SMALL DETAIL

“Lying in a manger”

A feeding trough meant an ordinary peasant home. Nobody there would say, “Unclean shepherds. Get out.”

They would be welcome.

LUKE 2:13–14

13 At once the angel was joined by a huge angelic choir singing God’s praises:

Glory to God in the heavenly heights,

Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.

TRANSIENT THOUGHTS

Close your eyes and imagine the huge number of angels in the sky. What do you see?

Colors? Brightness? Displays? Faces?

Type your answers in the chat.

LUKE 2:15–18

15 As the angel choir withdrew into heaven, the shepherds talked it over. “Let’s get over to Bethlehem as fast as we can and see for ourselves what God has revealed to us.” They left, running, and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. Seeing was believing. They told everyone they met what the angels had said about this child. All who heard the shepherds were impressed.

LUKE 2:19–20

19 Mary kept all these things to herself, holding them dear, deep within herself. The shepherds returned and let loose, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen. It turned out exactly the way they’d been told!

LUKE 2:20

They praised God for all they had heard and seen

Yes, for the Christ child. And also that they were welcome. Hospitality, even for them.

> *Jesus came. Jesus came for me.*

TRANSIENT THOUGHTS

How would you have felt if you were one of the shepherds?

Type your answers in the chat.

FROM STUDY TO MEDITATION

Now, let’s meditate on the passage

This is different from study.

GO DEEPER

Our course coming up in the spring

JAN’S BOOK

Meeting God in Scripture and its online course

FOUR MOVEMENTS

After studying a passage, we

Lectio	Read the passage slowly. Read it twice.
Meditatio	Notice what the Spirit highlights for you.
Oratio	Respond to God, or ask a question.
Contemplatio	Soak in it, from head to heart.

MEDITATION



Quiet yourself for a minute

Find a comfortable spot. Set aside distractions.

LECTIO · THE MESSAGE

Listen as we read Luke 2:8–20

Luke 2:8–12 *Matt*	Luke 2:13–14 *Jan*
Luke 2:15–18 *Matt*	Luke 2:19–20 *Jan*

Lectio

What words in the passage, or what dramatic moments, stand out to you?

> What moment in the story was most real to you? If you saw yourself in the passage, where was that?



Pause

Take your time. There’s no rush and no right answer.

Meditatio

Now, why do you think that stood out to you?

> What might God be inviting you to be, or think, or do?



Pause

Even if nothing has come yet, that’s alright.

Oratio

What does this passage make you want to say to God?

> Take a few minutes to respond to God.



Pause

Pause as long as you need.

Contemplatio

Now, simply “be.”

> Soak in the goodness of God. You may find yourself smiling at the goodness of God.

A BLESSING

On That Night

by Jan Richardson

Bringing Advent to Life

On that night when
you are holding
your very last hope,
thinking to let it go
as too small to be saved
or sanctified;

ON THAT NIGHT

on that night when
you turn away at last
from the far horizon
over which you had thought
your life would come
to find you;

on that night,
believe me,
this is where
the ache
will give way
to the mystery

and the blessing
that seemed so distant
will quietly
come to meet you,
holding your heart
in its two
luminous hands.


Bringing ADVENT to Life

YOU'RE INVITED

Bringing ADVENT *to Life*

A 4-week live experience on Monday evenings: November 30, December 7, 14 and 21, 2026

Join Bringing Advent to Life

[Enrollment link]

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Jan Johnson

ENROLL NOW