

WELCOME, EMMANUEL

by Winona Poole



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Welcome, Emmanuel

A collection for Advent candle-lighting

by Winona Poole

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PRODUCTION NOTES

Purpose of Collection: *Welcome, Emmanuel* is intended to begin on the first Sunday of Advent and continue through Christmas Eve, when the Christ candle is lit — thus there are actually five scenes to be dramatized over the four weeks of Advent. The collection as a whole explains Advent in a visual way. First, each scene adds something to the decorating of the church for Advent — like a gradual “hanging of the greens.” Second, the whole play explains the symbols of Advent. Third, it serves as the Advent candle-lighting itself.

Preparations and Props Needed: For all four weeks, use four purple or blue candles, one white or pink candle (for the Christ candle), and one lighter. (Optional: greenery or decoration around Advent candles.) You will also need the following decorations, each building on the week before. Beginning with Week 2: the Advent garden. Beginning with Week 3: white poinsettias. Beginning with Week 4: one red poinsettia. On Christmas Eve: a variety of candles — or minimum of four candles.

Staging for All Scenes: Front of sanctuary (even though a scene might imply a different sense of place).

Placement in Worship: Lighting the candle(s) of the Advent wreath may take place when it would typically occur in your worship service (often toward the beginning of the service). It may also replace the Scripture reading.

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The Reminder Wreath

Week 1

Liturgy: (Imbedded in this scene) Isaiah 2:2-5

Length: Approximately 5 minutes.

Characters: 2 adult females, 1 child

GRANDMA — She is going blind. (Most effective if actor is a real grandmother in the church whom everyone knows is going blind, but not necessary.)

ANNIE — Mother.

BILLY — May be a boy or a girl — just change the name and pronouns to fit.

Music: Though the script calls for Grandma and Annie to sing, they do not need to have great voices — just the desire to sing!

Setting: Grandma's living room. Place a small table On-stage.

Props: Bible, Advent wreath, and lighter. Most of the Advent wreath can be completed, with just one or two pieces added during the scene.

1 (*GRANDMA is arranging her Advent wreath. ANNIE and BILLY*
2 *enter.*)

3 ANNIE: Hi, Mom! What are you doing?

4 GRANDMA: Just putting up my Advent wreath.

5 ANNIE: (*Begins to help but looks sad.*) You know, as long as I
6 can remember you've put up an Advent wreath, haven't
7 you?

8 GRANDMA: Yes, I have.

9 BILLY: How come you still do it if you can't see it, Grandma?

10 ANNIE: (*Shocked*) Billy!

11 GRANDMA: No, no, it's OK, Annie. I think it's an excellent
12 question. Come here, Billy, and bring the lighter. (*He*
13 *does so.*) Now, do you remember what an Advent wreath
14 is all about?

15 BILLY: Uh, something about getting ready for Christmas —
16 oh, and the birth of Christ.

17 GRANDMA: That's right. Can you remember anything else?

18 BILLY: Well, each week you light a candle and someone
19 reads some stuff out of the Bible that's about Jesus and
20 stuff.

21 ANNIE: Now Billy, certainly you remember more than that
22 from Sunday school!

23 BILLY: (*Shrugs.*) Not really. (*ANNIE starts to get a little upset.*
24 *GRANDMA interrupts.*)

25 GRANDMA: Annie, it's OK. Billy, you asked me why I keep
26 doing this if I can't see the arrangement or the light,
27 right?

28 BILLY: Well, yeah.

29 GRANDMA: Everything I'm doing here is to act as a
30 reminder. It's a reminder for me. God doesn't need me
31 to light these candles or make a wreath, but I need it,
32 especially because I'm going blind. Come here. I want
33 you to light this candle. (*He does.*) You think I can't see
34 this because I'm going blind, but there are other ways
35 to see. Let me show you. Give me your hand and close

1 your eyes. (*She moves his hand close to the flame, but not*
2 *too close.*) Can you feel that, Billy?

3 **BILLY:** Yes.

4 **GRANDMA:** Tell me what you feel.

5 **BILLY:** Uh, it's warm.

6 **GRANDMA:** Is it moving?

7 **BILLY:** (*Thinks about it — feels it.*) Hey, yeah, it is moving. I
8 can feel that. That's cool!

9 **GRANDMA:** Now, keep your eyes closed and tell me
10 whether you're close or far from the light. (*She moves his*
11 *hand far and then close again, and he guesses each time.*)
12 There's more to being able to see than needing eyes. I
13 still light this candle to remind me that God's light is
14 with me, even if I can't see it. And it reminds me that
15 if I want to feel God's light, I need to get closer. Isn't
16 that what Advent's about? A reminder to get closer to
17 God?

18 **BILLY:** Hey, Mom, you should try this!

19 **GRANDMA:** Maybe your Mom could read us the Advent
20 Scripture. It's on the table, Annie.

21 **ANNIE:** Sure, Mom. (*Reads Isaiah 2:2-5.*) "Now it will come
22 about that in the last days the mountain of the house
23 of the Lord will be established as the chief of the
24 mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all
25 the nations will stream to it. And many peoples will
26 come and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of
27 the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may
28 teach us concerning his ways and that we may walk in
29 his paths.'

30 For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of
31 the Lord from Jerusalem. And he will judge between
32 the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples;
33 and they will hammer their swords into plowshares and
34 their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up
35 sword against nation, and never again will they learn

1 war. Come, house of Jacob, and let us walk in the light
2 of the Lord.”

3 Here, Billy. (*Hands him the script.*) Why don't you read
4 the next part?

5 **BILLY:** Advent means “coming.” In this season we
6 anticipate the coming of Christ — past, present, and
7 future. We light this first candle as a symbol of
8 expectation. May the light sent from God shine in the
9 darkness to show us the way to salvation. O come, O
10 come, Emmanuel!

11 **GRANDMA:** (*Begins to sing.*) “O come, O come, Emmanuel,”
12 (*ANNIE joins in*) “And ransom captive Israel ... ”

13 **BILLY:** What does that mean?

14 **GRANDMA:** What, Billy?

15 **BILLY:** Ransom captive something-or-other.

16 **GRANDMA:** It means “Come, Lord, and save us from all
17 those things that keep us in bondage.”

18 **BILLY:** Bondage?

19 **GRANDMA:** Think slavery or prison.

20 **BILLY:** Oh. (*Thoughtful pause*) But I don't know anyone
21 who's a slave or in prison, do you?

22 **GRANDMA:** No. But there are lots of things that sometimes
23 make us feel all tied up — like a really demanding job,
24 or an addiction, or even a desire for something that we
25 can't have.

26 **BILLY:** Like when Dad has to work so much he can't come
27 home and have dinner with us?

28 **GRANDMA:** Yes, exactly. So the song is Jesus inviting all of
29 us to draw close to him, and it's a promise that he will
30 give us freedom from that bondage if we ask.

31 **BILLY:** Oh, I get it. How did you get so smart, Grandma?

32 **GRANDMA:** Oh, I don't know about that.

33 **ANNIE:** Maybe it takes a little blindness to teach us how to
34 see. (*Pause*) Why don't we keep singing? That was fun.
35 (*All agree and segue into the hymn “O Come, O Come,*

1 *Emmanuel," verse one only. It may be sung by a choir or the*
2 *congregation. The bulletin should indicate if the congregation*
3 *is to join in.)*

4

5 **SONG: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," first verse**

6 **"O come, O come, Emmanuel,**

7 **And ransom captive Israel,**

8 **That mourns in lonely exile here**

9 **Until the Son of God appear.**

10 **Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel**

11 **Shall come to thee, O Israel!"** (*All ACTORS sit down.*)

The Advent Garden

Week 2

Liturgy: (Imbedded in this scene) Isaiah 11:1-4

Length: Approximately 8 minutes.

Characters: 1 older adult female, 1 younger adult male

MRS. B. — An elderly woman who is disabled in some way (could be represented by a cane or walker or even a wheelchair).

MARVIN — A neighbor.

Music: The script calls for Marvin and Mrs. B. to sing together. Only Marvin needs to be able to carry a tune.

Setting: Mrs. B.'s house. You will need a table to hold Mrs. B.'s Advent garden and supplies.

Props: Advent wreath and lighter, gardening gloves and small trowel, and "Advent garden." The Advent garden was originally created as follows: We arranged some plants (general green houseplants) in front of the podium — three tiered, leaving space for the Advent garden. Our Advent garden was planted in a window box. We had pre-planted a white amaryllis bulb in the center that the horticulturalist said would most likely bloom around Christmas (and it did!). We also planted some white cyclamen as well as some green houseplants (philodendron, ferns, ivy, etc. The horticulturalist at the local nursery helped design the planter box). In reality, the only thing Mrs. B. does is put some extra dirt into the planter. One plant needs to look kind of sickly but not dying; one plant needs to be slated to bloom around Christmas (if using an amaryllis bulb, plant it seven to ten weeks in advance so it will bloom around Christmas), and one plant should be a shoot from another plant (which we actually did with a philodendron).

1 (MRS. B. is arranging her Advent garden and putting in
2 additional soil when there is a knock at the front door.)

3 MRS. B.: Come in!

4 MARVIN: Hey, Mrs. B., how's it goin'?

5 MRS. B.: Oh, hello, Marvin, come in, come in. You're just in
6 time to help me with this. Could you put this planter
7 right here? (*Ad lib description of where to put the planter,*
8 *depending on location in front of sanctuary. You can also*
9 *add a few plants around it, but it's not completed yet, and*
10 *should look incomplete.>) So, how does it look, Marvin?*

11 MARVIN: It's beautiful, but are you aware that this one
12 plant here is kind of, well, dying?

13 MRS. B.: (*She laughs.*) Yes! It's not exactly dying, but it is
14 definitely sad. I put it there on purpose. This is my
15 Advent garden.

16 MARVIN: Huh. I've heard of Advent wreaths and Advent
17 calendars, but I've never heard of an Advent garden.
18 That's a new one.

19 MRS. B.: It's something my mother used to do. I'm not sure
20 why, except that a garden seemed to be the way God
21 spoke to Mom. She always had a garden, but her
22 Advent garden was special — different from the others.

23 MARVIN: So what's different about an Advent garden?

24 MRS. B.: Three things, actually. An Advent garden has to
25 have three ingredients: One plant that is a shoot from
26 another plant, one plant that needs help, and one plant
27 that will hopefully bloom at some point close to
28 Christmas.

29 MARVIN: That seems oddly specific. I take it there's some
30 significance in those three things.

31 MRS. B.: Oh, yes — quite significant. It's based on the
32 prophecies of Isaiah. If you want to know more, we
33 have to read some Scripture. Are you game?

34 MARVIN: Totally, Mrs. B. Give me the details — I'm all ears.

35 MRS. B.: First, let me get this Bible. Maybe you could get

1 that lighter — I have a job for you, too.

2 **MARVIN:** OK. (*Picks up lighter.*)

3 **MRS. B.:** (*Reading*) First is Isaiah 11:1-2: "Then a shoot will
4 spring from the stem of Jesse, and a branch from his
5 roots will bear fruit. The Spirit of the Lord will rest on
6 Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit
7 of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the
8 fear of the Lord." (*To MARVIN*) The plant that is a
9 shoot from another plant is to remind us that Jesus is
10 from the lineage of David.

11 **MARVIN:** David? I thought it said Jesse.

12 **MRS. B.:** Jesse was David's father. According to Matthew,
13 that was one of the proofs that Jesus was the long-
14 awaited Messiah prophesied by Isaiah. Next are verses
15 3-4: (*Reading*) "And He will delight in the fear of the
16 Lord, and He will not judge by what His eyes see, nor
17 make a decision by what His ears hear; but with
18 righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with
19 fairness for the afflicted of the earth." (*To MARVIN*) My
20 mother said that the struggling plant was a reminder to
21 her to give people a second chance, because if God
22 wasn't going to condemn the poor and afflicted, then
23 she shouldn't either. Her theory was that surrounding
24 the struggling plant with the thriving plants might help
25 it. She said that's what a church was for — a church
26 was supposed to be a place where the "poor in spirit"
27 could come and be restored.

28 **MARVIN:** I don't know, Mrs. B. I'm not convinced that
29 going to church makes you healthy these days.
30 There're some pretty sick religious freaks in the world.

31 **MRS. B.:** I'm sure you're correct, Marvin. (*Pause to think*)
32 But that's why the garden metaphor is so powerful for
33 me. In the same way that there are many kinds of
34 gardens, there are many kinds of churches. The point
35 is, the healthy gardens are the ones that are connected

1 to their source of life — roots digging deep into the
 2 earth and leaves reaching high toward the sun.
 3 Churches need to do the same thing — stay connected
 4 to God and reach for God's truth.

5 **MARVIN:** Yeah, but it's so complicated. How's a person
 6 supposed to know if a church is connected or reaching
 7 for the truth?

8 **MRS. B.:** I read that answer — “And a branch from his
 9 roots will bear fruit” (*Isaiah 11:1*). People who are
 10 connected to God just naturally bear fruit. And that's
 11 the third ingredient to Mom's Advent garden: the plant
 12 that will bloom. But I don't know when it will bloom —
 13 I just wait patiently. I care for the plant, I do what I
 14 can, and for the rest I have to put my trust in God. I
 15 know that as long as the plant is connected and cared
 16 for, it will eventually bear fruit — at least that's my
 17 hope. It will blossom. I think churches are like that,
 18 too. Care for the people, stay connected to God, wait
 19 patiently, and they'll bloom and it will be glorious!

20 **MARVIN:** There's one problem with your metaphor, Mrs. B.
 21 Flowers don't last long.

22 **MRS. B.:** Very true, Marvin. And so the circle of life continues.
 23 Life, death, resurrection.

24 **MARVIN:** Pretty deep. I think I need to ponder that a bit.
 25 (*Pause*) You said you had a job for me. What was it?

26 **MRS. B.:** The Advent candle-lighting. Will you light the
 27 candles while I read?

28 **MARVIN:** Sure thing.

29 **MRS. B.:** Advent means “coming.” In this season we anticipate
 30 that Christ has come in the past, will come at the end
 31 of time, and is coming into our hearts this very day.
 32 The first candle is a symbol of expectation and hope.
 33 (*She looks up to see MARVIN lighting the first candle and*
 34 *then continues.*) We light the second candle as a symbol
 35 of proclamation. (*MARVIN lights the second candle.*)

1 **God's truth has been preserved in the Scripture, spoken**
 2 **by the prophets of old, was lived in Jesus' life and**
 3 **ministry, and is still prompted by the Holy Spirit. May**
 4 **the word of the Lord lead us to salvation. O come, O**
 5 **come, Emmanuel!**

6 **MARVIN: That's a song, isn't it? That last part?**

7 **MRS. B.: Yes! Why don't we sing it — but only the second**
 8 **verse, because it's the second Sunday of Advent. It's**
 9 **hymn number _____.** *(Insert correct number from your*
 10 *church hymnal. MRS. B. and MARVIN take a hymnal and*
 11 *begin to sing. The congregation should be invited to join in —*
 12 *either in the bulletin or by a song leader. No accompaniment*
 13 *preferred.)*

14

15 **SONG: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," second verse**
 16 **"O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer**
 17 **Our spirits by thine advent here;**
 18 **Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,**
 19 **And death's dark shadows put to flight.**
 20 **Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel**
 21 **Shall come to thee, O Israel!"**

22

23 **MRS. B.:** *(Pause until all bulletins or hymnals have been put*
 24 *away.)* **Did you hear that, Marvin? Did you hear the**
 25 **angels singing with us?**

26 **MARVIN:** *(Disbelieving, he laughs.)* **Sure, Mrs. B. I bet there**
 27 **were at least a hundred angels singing along!** *(Use whatever*
 28 *number fits the amount of people in the congregation.)*

29 **MRS. B.:** *(She laughs along with him.)* **You have a lovely voice,**
 30 **Marvin. Any chance you'd be willing to come sing with**
 31 **me next week, and we can see if the Advent garden has**
 32 **bloomed yet?**

33 **MARVIN: You got it, Mrs. B. I suppose I should get going**
 34 **now.** *(Starts to exit.)* **Oh, I almost forgot the reason I**
 35 **came over! Can I borrow some oil? I'm all out.**

1 **MRS. B.:** Of course you can, Marvin. Tell you what — if
2 you'll just help me clean up this mess, you can have as
3 much oil as you need!

4 **MARVIN:** It's a deal, Mrs. B. (*MARVIN and MRS. B. clean up*
5 *the mess. There could be a hymn here or something to cover*
6 *whatever time it takes to remove any "mess," then MRS. B.*
7 *and MARVIN exit.*)

Color Codes

Week 3

Liturgy: (Imbedded in this scene) Isaiah 35:1-2

Length: Approximately 5 minutes.

Characters:

DYANNA — Youth group leader

KATIE, KENDRA, CASEY, EMILY, and FRANK — Youth
(Names provided in script may be changed to use the real names of your youth leader(s) and youth group members. Dialog may be reassigned to fit the numbers of youth in the youth group as desired.)

Setting: The church sanctuary. The purpose of the youth group gathering is to continue the decoration of the church during the Advent season.

Props: A variety of white poinsettias, Advent garden, Advent wreath and lighter, Bible to read Scripture, paper and pencil.

- 1 *(YOUTH and DYANNA walk up center aisle from back of church*
2 *[Or as is appropriate for sanctuary space] carrying poinsettias.)*
- 3 **DYANNA:** OK, everybody, bring in the poinsettias, but be
4 careful with them. People take these poinsettias home
5 after Christmas, so we need to take care of them.
- 6 **KATIE:** Yeah, my mom always takes the leftover poinsettias
7 to shut-ins on Christmas day.
- 8 **KENDRA:** Where are we supposed to put them, Dyanna?
- 9 **DYANNA:** Up in front — I'll show you where they go.
- 10 **CASEY:** Dyanna, why are we putting the poinsettias in now
11 rather than at the beginning of Advent?
- 12 **EMILY:** Yeah, didn't Advent start, like, two or three weeks
13 ago?
- 14 **FRANK:** We decorated our house just last weekend.
- 15 **KATIE:** Hush up, you two. Let Dyanna answer Casey's
16 question.
- 17 **DYANNA:** It's a good question, Casey. Let's put the
18 poinsettias down and then I'll answer that question for
19 all of you. *(Put poinsettias in place in the sanctuary as*
20 *instructed.)* OK, everybody, gather around here and I'll
21 show you the reason. The reason is in the Bible. *(Looks*
22 *up Isaiah 35:1-2.)* Now listen to what it says, and you tell
23 me if you can figure out why the poinsettias get placed
24 in the sanctuary at this time of Advent. *(DYANNA reads*
25 *Isaiah 35:1-2.)* "The wilderness and the desert will be
26 glad, and the Arabah" — that's a desert — "will rejoice
27 and blossom; like the crocus it will blossom profusely
28 and rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy. The glory
29 of Lebanon will be given to it, the majesty of Carmel
30 and Sharon, they will see the glory of the Lord, the
31 majesty of our God."
- 32 Now, anyone have a guess? *(Most YOUTH look*
33 *dumbfounded.)*
- 34 **KATIE:** *(Thinking, a pause)* The desert will blossom with
35 flowers! These are the flowers.

1 **DYANNA:** That's right, Katie.

2 **KENDRA:** I don't get what that has to do with Advent,
3 though.

4 **DYANNA:** Well, Advent is a time of waiting, a time of
5 preparation, a time of hoping for a better future. The
6 poinsettias represent our hope for that time when Jesus
7 brings us all peace in the land and there's great singing
8 and joy. *(No one gets it.)* Do you remember last week,
9 when they talked about the Advent garden and the
10 flower that would bloom?

11 **EMILY:** *(As is appropriate to say: "And it bloomed!" or "But it
12 hasn't bloomed yet!" or something of that sort.)*

13 **DYANNA:** The Advent garden is a metaphor about waiting
14 for something you hope will happen. *(They still don't get
15 it.)* Let me give you an example. Kendra, you want to
16 be a famous writer, don't you?

17 **KENDRA:** Well, yeah, that'd be great.

18 **DYANNA:** Do you just all of a sudden become a great writer
19 and write a best-selling novel?

20 **KENDRA:** Uh, no. I've been working on a book for over a
21 year, and it's still not ready yet.

22 **DYANNA:** Well, Advent is like that book you're writing. You
23 have a great idea, but it takes time and work to get it
24 to "bloom" into the great masterpiece you want it to be,
25 right?

26 **KENDRA:** Yeah, I never quite thought of it that way before.
27 Hey — that gives me an idea! I need a pencil and paper
28 right now! *(She finds a pencil and paper and sits down to
29 write.)*

30 **CASEY:** I still don't see what this has to do with Christmas.
31 And how come there's only white poinsettias? What
32 happened to all the red ones?

33 **DYANNA:** Christmas is about the incarnation of Christ —
34 God being with us. A symbol of that incarnation is the
35 light — remember the Scripture we studied last week

1 about Jesus being the “light of the world?” Well, the
2 color that most represents light is white. So throughout
3 the Advent season, we gradually move from the cold
4 blues *(or purples)* of nighttime to the bright white of
5 daytime. We move from darkness to light. We move
6 from hopelessness to hope. Do you understand it now?

7 **CASEY:** Yeah, I guess so. But I still wish we had some red
8 poinsettias — I like them better.

9 **DYANNA:** Be patient, Casey, be patient. OK, you all, it’s time
10 to practice the reading for Sunday. Frank, you start.
11 *(Those reading move to the Advent wreath.)*

12 **FRANK:** *(Reading)* Advent means “coming.” In the music of
13 the season, in the Scripture stories, and in the
14 contemplation of the miracle of incarnation, we prepare
15 ourselves to receive once again the Christ. The first
16 candle is a symbol of hope. *(Another YOUTH without*
17 *dialog may light the first candle.)*

18 **EMILY:** *(Reading)* The second candle is a symbol of
19 proclamation — a proclaiming of God’s truth. Like an
20 Advent garden, we reach for truth in the depths of
21 God’s Word, and we look up to the Son for our example
22 and strength to grow. *(Another YOUTH without dialog*
23 *may light the second candle.)*

24 **KATIE:** The third Sunday of Advent has sometimes been
25 called Gaudete, or “Sunday of Joy.” In the midst of
26 Advent, we are reminded that all our preparations are
27 misplaced if they become harried and frustrated, but
28 instead we should seek those things that nourish deep
29 joy for ourselves and others. We look forward in hope
30 and joy to the coming light of Christ. “O Come, O Come,
31 Emmanuel!” *(Another YOUTH without dialog may light the*
32 *third candle.)*

33 **KENDRA:** *(Suddenly popping up)* Hey, can we sing that song?

34 **DYANNA:** *(Surprised and laughing)* Welcome back, Kendra!

35 **KENDRA:** I wrote down my idea. Now I want to sing!

1 **DYANNA:** OK, then. It's the third Sunday of Advent, so let's
2 sing the third verse. *(No accompaniment.)*

3

4 **SONG:** "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," third verse

5 "O Come, Thou Wisdom from on high,

6 And order all things, far and nigh;

7 To us the path of knowledge show,

8 And cause us in her ways to go.

9 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel

10 Shall come to thee, O Israel!"

11

12 **KENDRA:** *(When the song is finished.)* Ooh — that just gave
13 me another idea! I've got to write it down! *(She runs to*
14 *write again.)*

15 **DYANNA:** *(Laughs at KENDRA.)* Come on, let's all go to Bible
16 study now. *(YOUTH GROUP exits. KENDRA suddenly*
17 *realizes she's being left behind and runs to catch up.)*

In Preparation

Week 4

Liturgy: (Imbedded in this scene) Isaiah 7:10-16

Length: Approximately 5 minutes.

Characters: Two adults

PERSON A

PERSON B

(The script labels them as Person A and Person B because it doesn't really matter which gender either person is.)

Setting: The church sanctuary.

Props: One large red poinsettia to be placed in the middle of the white poinsettias in a prominent place, plus a variety of white poinsettias and the Advent garden from previous weeks, the Advent wreath and lighter, and a Bible to read Scripture.

1 (PERSON B is sitting up front. PERSON A enters with one
2 poinsettia plant in his/her hand.)

3 PERSON A: Hey, what's wrong with you? You look like you
4 just lost your millions or something. Cheer up. It's
5 Christmas time!

6 PERSON B: I have to do the Advent candle-lighting in
7 church on Sunday.

8 PERSON A: (Sarcastically) Ooh yeah, heavy burden. Come
9 on, you can't be serious. You've done stuff in church
10 before. Why should you be afraid of this one?

11 PERSON B: I'm not afraid to be in front of people, it's the
12 Scripture lesson. Have you read the Scripture for this
13 week? It's awful!

14 PERSON A: Uh, no.

15 PERSON B: Well, here, read it. It'll depress you, too.

16 PERSON A: (Reads Isaiah 7:10-16.) "Then the Lord spoke
17 again to Ahaz, saying, 'Ask a sign for yourself from the
18 Lord your God; make it deep as Sheol or high as
19 heaven.'

20 But Ahaz said, 'I will not ask, nor will I test the
21 Lord!' Then he said, 'Listen now, O house of David! Is
22 it too slight a thing for you to try the patience of men,
23 that you will try the patience of my God as well?
24 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: Behold,
25 a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will
26 call his name Immanuel. He will eat curds and honey
27 at the time he knows enough to refuse evil and choose
28 good. For before the boy will know enough to refuse
29 evil and choose good, the land whose two kings you
30 dread will be forsaken.' "

31 OK, but I don't get what's so depressing. Isn't it
32 about the hope of a Messiah to come save them?

33 PERSON B: But don't you get it? Read before and after it.
34 It's all about war and destruction and how God has to
35 step in because people are too stubborn to make peace



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