

WEEK 1: OH COME, OH COME IMMANUEL

Week One Introduction

Playlist (listen all week): *Oh Come, Oh Come Emmanuel* by Chris Tomlin

Oh Come, Oh Come Immanuel. Immanuel, meaning “God With Us”

This week, we **DELIGHT** in a God who has pursued deep connection and intimate relationship with all people — with *you* — from the beginning of our time, through the history that we see in the Old Testament, the incarnation and death of Jesus, and now through His Word, Presence and Spirit. This week, we will look at how “God was with Us” in the Old Testament, and a desperate longing for even more of His Presence.

This week, we have **HOPE** in the coming of Immanuel.

Week One Liturgy

Read at any point throughout week one.

Unexpected God, your advent alarms us. Wake us from drowsy worship, from the sleep that neglects love, and the sedative of misdirected frenzy. Awaken us now to your coming, and bend our angers into your peace. *Amen.*

Select Prayer from *Revised Common Lectionary*

December 1 — In The Garden

God has always wanted to BE WITH us. The original design: the Trinity to be in full and holy relationship with people. The desire and design was to bring you into the fullness of the Trinity's love. In the beginning, man walked freely with God in the Garden. This was the fullness of life until man sinned and thus broke that intimate connection.

Read: Genesis 3:8

The original walking-with-God-in-the-Garden presence of God was fullness, completeness, and holiness. Along with sin came a separation – the incompleteness of perfect presence.

How desperately we need the presence of God. O Come, O Come Immanuel!

Optional Engagements

- **Imagine:** Imagine what it looked like to walk with God in the Garden of Eden. Imagine what it felt like. What would you hear? Smell?
- **Meditate:** Slowly contemplate and bring to life in your imagination each phrase in this hymn. – I come to the garden alone / While the dew is still on the roses / And the voice I hear, falling on my ear / The Son of God discloses / And He walks with me / and He talks with me / And He tells me I am His own / And the joy we share as we tarry there / None other has ever known
- **Action:** Take a walk with God today (or this week). Speak to Him like you would speak to a close friend. Listen for His voice.
- **Family Activity:** Go on a walk with God together. Have the kids come up with questions they want to ask God. Everyone take turns telling God something.
- **Create:** Draw a picture of you and God in the Garden.
- **Ponder:** What questions does God ask you? What does He speak over you?
- **Journal:** Write out your conversation with God.
- **Breath Prayer:** Walk with me, Lord.

Playlist: *In the Garden* by Anthem Lights / *The Garden* by Kari Jobe

December 2 — Pillar of Cloud & Pillar of Fire

As God miraculously brought His people out of slavery in Egypt, God led them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. With these miraculous symbols, the people knew the Lord was *with* them and *guiding*. Day and night, these representations of His presence never left his people.

Read: Exodus 3:17-22

Although this presence of God was miraculous, it was not perfect presence. It was a powerful way to lead His people, but God's bigger desire was to come in flesh, lead in flesh and guide in flesh.

How desperately we need the presence of God. O Come, O Come Immanuel!

Optional Engagements

- **Ponder/Journal:** How does God lead *you* today? It might be in similar ways: the Holy Spirit's fire or the "All Consuming Fire" that is our God (Meaning: What does He turn His attention too? What does He burn away? How does He purify or refine?) or a gentle whisper of His voice or the subtle movement of the Spirit.
- **Action:** Make a fire (in the fireplace or light a candle). As you sit with the physical fire, mentally fix your gaze on our God, The Fire → The Light of Life. As you fix your eyes on The Fire, you become more like Him → radiating light and warmth.
- **Family Activity:** Gaze up at the clouds. Point out the shapes you see. Watch them as they move across the sky. Imagine together what it was like to be led by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.
- **Create:** Divide a piece of paper into two sections. On one section create a picture of the pillar of cloud by day and on the second section the pillar of fire by night.
- **Breath Prayer:** Guide me, O thou Great Jehova.

Playlist: *All Consuming Fire* by Chris McClarney / *I Will Exalt* by Bethel Music

December 3 — Tabernacle

In the Old Testament, while the Israelites wandered in the desert, the Lord instructed them to set up the tabernacle at each place they camped. The tabernacle is the place where God dwelt with his people.

Read: Exodus 25:1-9

The tabernacle was a temporary structure. The greater fulfillment of the tabernacle was Jesus Christ. Jesus himself came to “tabernacle” among us.

Read: John 1:14 “And the Word became flesh and ***tabernacled*** among us. And we beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten from the Father, full of grace and of truth.”

Although this presence of God was in a place with His people, it was not perfect presence. God desired a more intimate connection with all His people.

How desperately we need the presence of God. O Come, O Come Immanuel!

Optional Engagements

- **Ponder/Journal:** What might you set aside in order to create a tabernacle for God (a place for Him to consistently dwell) in your heart and your mind? What offering can you give?
- **Family Activity:** Build a Fort Tabernacle in your home. Optional pieces to include in the fort: 1. Entrance Gate 2. Outer Courtyard with Altar of Burnt Offering and Wash Basin 3. Holy Place with Table of Showbread (snack table), Menorah (lamp), Altar of Incense 4. Holy of Holies with the Ark of the Covenant (toy chest)
- **Breath Prayer:** Spirit, thank you for tabernacling in me.

Playlist: *Come to Me* by Jenn Johnson

December 4 — Ark of the Covenant

The Ark of the Covenant was the place where God would meet with His people and give them His commands.

Read: Exodus 25:10-22

Read: Hebrews 2:14-17

Christ is our High Priest. We can stand before God because of Jesus Christ.

Although the presence of God was close in the Ark of the Covenant, it was not perfect presence. God wanted all men to be able to come before Him, not just the High Priest at the time.

How desperately we need the presence of God. O Come, O Come Immanuel!

Optional Engagements

- **Family Activity:** Make an “Ark of the Covenant” with household items to represent each piece of and inside the Ark. Ideas: Ark (box or chest), angel decorations, Rod (stick, bat, candy cane), Ten Commandments (flat stones, books)
- **Action:** Be intentional with wrapping yourself in the presence of the Trinity – maybe that is prayer, fasting, meditation, praise, thanksgiving, solitude, etc.
- **Ponder:** The Ark of the Covenant and the items inside it, point to Jesus. 1) Aaron’s rod that budded represented Christ as the anointed priest of the Lord. 2) The Ten Commandments represented the moral law of God that Christ would fulfill. He came not to abolish the law but to fulfill it. 3) The manna represented the Bread of Life—Jesus’ body which was broken for us. 4) The blood of sacrifice was sprinkled on the mercy seat, representing the blood of Jesus that atoned for sin. 5) Jesus became the High Priest, revealing the truth and giving eternal life through His sacrifice on the cross.
- **Breath Prayer:** Because of Jesus, I can be in God’s presence.
- **Prayer:** Thank Jesus for being your High Priest.

Playlist: *Nothing Else* by Cody Carnes

December 5 — Prophets and Promise

God doesn't leave his people in the lurch in the Old Testament. Time and time again, through many prophets, God brought His voice, instructions, intentions, heart, warnings, promises and presence to His people. God desperately desired the hearts of His people. He knew His people had a problem with sin that no amount of good deeds or sacrifices could ever rectify. Through prophets, God makes a promise that He will one day send the Messiah.

Through Major Prophets and Minor Prophets, God was with His people. For many years, God presented Himself, His Words, His intentions, and His promises. Even in Babylonian and Assyrian captivity, God moved among His people.

Read: Jeremiah 31:31-33

Read: Isaiah 9:1-7

Although this presence of God was through men to His people, it was not perfect presence. God made a promise of Perfect Presence. There was great anticipation for that Perfect Presence!

How desperately we need the presence of God. O Come, O Come Immanuel!

Optional Engagements

- **Ponder:** Who is speaking the heart, words, intentions, and promises of God in your life today? Spend time dwelling on the promises of God.
- **Journal:** Write out some of God's Promises throughout scripture.
- **Action:** Ask the Spirit, "Who needs encouragement?" See who comes to mind. Then, seek the Spirit on a word of encouragement to share with them. Mail a letter. Send a text. Make a call. Meet face to face.
- **Create/Family Activity:** Write out Promises of God. Hang them around your house or put them in special places for others to find. Let the promises of God shine on you. Examples: Isaiah 41:10 I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. / Isaiah 26:3 You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. / Deuteronomy 31:8 The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you
- **Breath Prayer:** Speak, Lord. I am listening.

Playlist: *Names* by Elevation Worship and Maverick City / *Revival* by Lauren Daigle

December 6 — His Presence

David recognized the Presence of God all around Him. God was with him at all times and everywhere he went. David sought after the very heart of God.

Read: Psalm 139:1-18

Although this presence of God was all around, it was not God's desire of His perfect presence with His people. He wanted to live, breathe, walk, talk, touch, and bless in the flesh, and with sin and death fully defeated.

How desperately we need the presence of God. O Come, O Come Immanuel!

Optional Engagements

- **Ponder:** Where do you most feel the presence of God?
- **Action:** If possible, go meet with God in that place.
- **Imagine:** Imagine yourself all throughout your daily/weekly places (home, school, work, gym, store, restaurant, coffee shop, church, etc). Now imagine God in those spaces with you. Imagine Him smiling as He is present with you. Imagine Him speaking to you in each space.
- **Family Activity:** Everyone share a place or time they felt God's presence. Share specific ways you see how God has made you "fearfully and wonderfully."
- **Action:** Speak out loud to yourself in the mirror, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made by God."
- **Pray:** Pray Psalm 139 making David's words your words.
- **Action:** Pursue after the heart of God.
- **Breath Prayer:**
 - God, you are all around me.
 - You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

Playlist: *Psalm 139 - Far Too Wonderful* by Shane and Shane / *Where Can I Go – Psalm 139* by Ellie Holcomb

December 7 — Temple

It was in King David's heart to build a Temple for the Name of the Lord. His son, King Solomon, carried out that desire. The Temple was a place for the Name of the Lord, the God of Israel, to dwell.

Read: 2 Chronicles 6:40-42 Part of Solomon's Prayer at the dedication of the temple:

“Now, my God, may your eyes be open and your ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. Now arise, Lord God, and come to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. May your priests, Lord God, be clothed with salvation, may your faithful people rejoice in your goodness. Lord God, do not reject your anointed one. Remember the great love promised to David your servant.”

Although the Temple was magnificently and ornately built for the presence of God, it was not God's desire of His perfect presence.

Read: Acts 17:24-27

How desperately we need the presence of God. O Come, O Come Immanuel! Holy Spirit come.

The world awaits His presence. His power and His presence dwells within us. Rise to be His witness. Let the Spirit guide you. Realize the gift you have with Jesus Christ as your High Priest, and choose to walk in that forgiveness and grace. Intentionally move into and align yourself with the presence of God — for by it, you are transformed. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Let your words speak revival. Let your heart continue burning, for our King is soon returning.

Optional Engagements

- **Create/Family Activity:** Designate a place in your house for you to meet with the Lord. Place your Bible, journal, pen, notecards, candle, etc there for easy access. Ideas: Prayer closet. Special chair.
- **Ponder:** How does the presence of God transform you?
- **Prayer:** Lord, I want to see you. Let me be keenly aware of your presence all around me. Let me have eyes to see and ears to hear. I want to be close to you. To dwell with you as you constantly dwell with me. Jesus, I anticipate you. Let my gaze ever be on you. As I am in your presence, transform me into your likeness. Holy Spirit, come. Let me behold you. Let your glory fill my spaces — my heart, my thoughts, my home, my going and my coming. Fill me til I am overflowing. Amen
- **Breath Prayer:**
 - Lord, I want to see you.
 - Jesus, I anticipate you.
 - Holy Spirit, come.

Playlist: Fullness — Elevation Worship