A Seasonal All Age Worship Service

(SAAW026)

Advent: Preparations for the coming King

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"ADVENT: PREPARATIONS FOR THE COMING KING"

Service Aim:

To encourage people to be ready for Jesus' return.

Biblical Reference(s):

Luke 3:1-18, Matthew 24:42, Romans 13:11-14, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

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Outline of Service:

Welcome Introduce the theme

Opening Words: "I am the Alpha and the Omega"

Opening songs: A couple of Advent songs to draw people into worship (See Appendix 1)

Warm up: Preparations for Prince Charles' visit

Light candle: Light Advent candle to remind us that Jesus is returning

Bible Reading: Luke 3:2-14,18 dramatised

Talk 1: John the Baptist was sent to get people ready for Jesus.

His message was a call to repentance:

To clear away the rubbish of sin

To make God the centre of their lives

Song: <u>A song/s about Jesus arriving</u> (See Appendix 1)

Talk 2: Jesus will return one day, and John's message of repentance is relevant to us

Puppets: "Produce good fruit"

Link: James learnt from John the Baptist

Confession: Imagine the light of the Holy Spirit shining in your heart.

• What rubbish ie sin, will He show up? Confession prayer.

Song: A song/s about holiness (See Appendix 1)

Talk 3: We also need to allow God to be the centre of our lives

Video: Video drama "Lord. Lord"

Summary: John the Baptist prepared people for Jesus when He first came. His message

of repentance (turn away from sin & turn back to God) is relevant to us today.

Song: <u>A song/s of surrender to Jesus</u> (See Appendix 1)

Prayers: Praying some Scriptures and ending with the Lord's Prayer

Notices

Drama: "Getting ready"

Final song: Advent song (See Appendix 1)

Blessing



Notes for the service:

General notes and instructions for the service are in black font.

Prayers or responses said by the congregation together are in bold purple font.

The full script of a talk or other activity is in purple font.

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Welcome:

Welcome everyone to the service and to the theme of "Advent – Preparations for the coming King"

Opening Prayer:

You may choose to open the service with:

- · an informal prayer
- a prayer from a book like "New Patterns for Worship" that the congregation can say together,
- or the following words from the start and the end of the book of Revelation:

I am the Alpha and Omega says the Lord God,

who is, and who was, and who is to come. (Rev 1:8)

He who testifies to these things says: Yes I am coming soon! **Amen, Come, Lord Jesus!** (Rev 22:20)

Opening Songs:

A couple of Advent songs to draw people into worship as per Appendix 1

Warm up:

Before the service begins, scatter rubbish all around the worship area. You will need:

- a couple of black sacks
- a few dusters.
- a fancy chair, for example, in an Anglican church you could use the chair that the bishop sits on when he visits! The chair needs to be centre front, so it is visible to everyone.

Imagine if this morning we received a hand delivered notice from the Palace telling us that His Royal Highness – Prince Charles, our future king, has decided to join us towards the end of this service.

Looking around you, what do you think we need to do to get ready as we wait for Prince Charles? (Receive responses)

I think that the 1st thing we would all agree upon is that we need to clean up the place......

- if we look around, there is rubbish everywhere.
- I also think that the area around me needs a bit of a dust.

I need some children willing to come and help clear up. (Hand out dusters and black sacks to collect rubbish)

Let's see how quickly these children can clear up the rubbish and dust.

Well done. Thank you...a church fit for a future King!



¹ Church House Publishing – ISBN 0715120603 © Jane Hulme 2021

The 2nd thing we need to do is put a special seat at the centre of the church for him to sit on, (*Put special chair in place*) and we would put a microphone in place so that we would all be able to hear what he has to say to us.

I am sure that you can think of all sorts of other things we could do to get ready to welcome Prince Charles, our future King.

Getting ready to meet a special visitor takes thought.

Advent is the time when we think about getting ready for the most important meeting, we will all have.

- This meeting isn't with the Queen's Son Prince Charles,
- but with God's Son, Jesus.

The Bible tells us that one day Jesus is going to return to earth.

- Listen to what St Paul says to the Thessalonian Christians: "For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God...." (1Thess 4:16)
- Wow that is going to be an exciting day!
- For those of us who know and follow Jesus, it will be a day of great joy and celebration as we finally see our Lord face to face.

During our service today, we are going to be thinking about how we can get ready for the day we meet King Jesus.

Light candle:

If you have an Advent wreath, invite a child to come and light the candle(s). Tell the congregation that the candle(s) is a reminder that Jesus will return one day. You may like to use the following responsive prayer:

As we light our advent candle **Light of the world, shine on us.** As we prepare for Christmas time **Light of the world, shine on us.**

In this world of pain and darkness, **Light of the world, shine through us.** To all the people who don't know you, **Light of the world, shine through us.**

Jesus you are coming again, Light of the world, light the way. In our service here today Light of the world, light the way.

Bible Reading 1:

The Bible reading is Luke 3:2-14,18 and can be read by a child, young person or adult in a modern version of the Bible. Alternatively, you may like to dramatise it. (See Appendix 2). You could introduce it by saying something like:

Before Jesus came to earth the first time as a baby born in Bethlehem, God sent the prophet, John the Baptist to help people get ready.

Let's hear what happened.



Talk 1:

For this talk you need:

- One of the black sacks of rubbish,
- Two pieces of paper; one with the word, "SIN" written on it in a large font, and the other with the word, "GOD" written on it in a large font and some Sellotape.
- The chair that was used earlier.

John the Baptist was God's messenger, and he was sent to get people ready for Jesus' coming.

Jesus was the ultimate special visitor!

The people were to prepare, not by cleaning up their buildings,

- by dusting and picking up rubbish, like we have just done here in church,
- but by cleaning up their hearts.

Unfortunately, the people had been living lives their own way for many, many years.

Their hearts were full up with the rubbish of sin. (hold up black bin sack of rubbish and attach SIN word onto black sack)

- They cheated people out of money,
- they were selfish and greedy,
- they didn't love one another or God.
- God was no longer at the centre of their lives,

John's message to these people was a message of repentance.

- They were to turn away from their sins and turn back to God.
- In other words, they were to **get rid** of the rubbish of sin from their lives, (Put rubbish away)
- and allow God to be at **the centre** of their lives, (Put GOD word onto the chair laid out earlier)

Many people listened to what John said.

- They turned away from their sins and they turned back to God.....they repented.
- As a symbol of their wanting to live differently, they were baptized in the River Jordan.
- They were now ready to hear Jesus' life-giving message that He had come to deal
 with the effects of sin once and for all so that they could have a restored relationship
 with their Heavenly Father.

John the Baptist prepared the people well, **ready** for Jesus' first coming to earth.

Song:

A song/s about Jesus arriving as per Appendix 1

Talk 2:

You need the "SIN" bag of rubbish and the chair used earlier for this talk.

We have heard how God sent John the Baptist to prepare people for Jesus' first arrival,

making them ready to welcome Him and follow Him.

So how do **we** prepare for Jesus when he returns to earth, so that **we** are ready to meet him?



John the Baptist's message is as relevant for us today as it was to people 2000 years ago.

• The first thing we are to do is to turn away from our sins, in other words **get rid** of the rubbish of sin from our lives, (*Put rubbish away*)

Grandad is helping James to understand the importance of turning away from one of his sins.

Puppets:

The puppet script is called "Produce good fruit" (see Appendix 3). This script works with a boy puppet "James" and an older man puppet "Grandad." The aim of the puppet script is to challenge people to not only be convicted of sin, but to repent of it i.e. to put things right. If you don't have puppets, you could simply dramatise the puppet script into a conversation between a boy and a "Grandad" figure. If learning words is a problem, you could record the script as a "Zoom conversation" between the boy and his Grandad, and then show it on a screen during the service.

Link:

James learnt from John the Baptist, didn't he?

He realised that he needed to put something right that he had done wrong....

You see, turning away from sin isn't about just about feeling bad for doing something wrong.

• Turning away from sin is about choosing not to do that wrong thing again and about putting things right where we can.

We are going to ask the Holy Spirit to show us what sins we need to confess today and turn away from, so that we can be forgiven.....

Confession and Absolution:

Let's be quiet as we listen to what God wants to say to each one of us. PAUSE

Imagine for a moment the light and purity of the Holy Spirit shining in your heart......PAUSE

• What rubbish – what sin is there that He will show up?......PAUSE

Is the Holy Spirit showing you something about the way that you use your tongue?

- Maybe you say unkind things about other people,
- or gossip.
- or use foul language,
- or have outbursts of anger.

Is the Holy Spirit showing you that you can be:

- selfish.
- or lazy,
- or greedy,
- or proud
- or something else altogether...PAUSE

² You can purchase both a boy and a Grandad puppet from <u>www.onewayuk.com</u>
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Let us pray together:

Lord Jesus,

We want to be ready for when You return.

Please forgive us for the wrong things we have done, and for the good things we have not done.

We turn away from doing those wrong things again and ask for Your help to put things right.

Thank you that You died so we can be forgiven.

Help us to turn to You, and follow You,

Amen.

Follow this with a prayer of Absolution. This could be:

- an informal prayer led by the service leader or
- an Absolution prayer from a book like "New Patterns for Worship." (See footnote 1 on p.3)
- or the following prayer:

Thank you, Lord, that when we confess our sins to you, you forgive us and give us a fresh start.

Help us Lord to walk closely with You until the day that we meet you face to face. Amen.

Song:

A song/s about holiness as per Appendix 1

Talk 3:

Turning away from sin is one part of John the Baptist's message.

What is the 2nd part?

The 2nd part is turning back to God, in other words, allowing God to be at the centre of your life, not you!

Each one of us here is deeply loved by our Heavenly Father, and He has invited us to walk with Him each day of our lives,

which is a tremendous privilege.

Allowing Him to be at the centre of our lives means that we **listen** to what He says and then **do** what He says.

- It is like we allow Him to be in the driving seat, not us.
- You see God knows the very best for us and He asks us to do the things that He knows will make our lives better.

So, for example, one of the things that God has told us to do is to forgive other people when they mess up. Watch this.

Video:

The video is called "Lord, Lord" and is produced by "Onetimeblind3".

³ You can either purchase this video from "worshipmediahouse.com" or find it on YouTube by putting "onetimeblind Lord Lord" in the search bar."



The purpose of the video is to show that if we are going to call Jesus, "Lord" then we need to listen to Him and obey what He says. At the end of the video, you could say something like:

If there is someone that you need to forgive, can I encourage you to obey Jesus and forgive them?

Unforgiveness is one of the biggest blocks in your relationship with Jesus.

Summary

So, as we summarise what John the Baptist has taught us,

- we can say that the way we prepare for the day that Jesus returns is through repentance....
- in other words: turning away from our sins and turning back to God, allowing Him to be at the centre of our lives: to be Lord.....

Song:

A song of surrender to Jesus as per Appendix 1

Prayers:

You may want to pray a few simple prayers around the theme of being ready for Jesus' return. Alternatively, you could use the prayers below:

Let us pray:

When I say: Lord Jesus, one day You will return.

Please say: Make us ready Lord.

Lord Jesus, one day You will return.

Make us ready Lord.

Jesus said: "Therefore keep watch because you do not know the day or the hour until I return." (Matthew 25:13)

Lord Jesus, help us keep our eyes upon you and not distracted by all that is going on in the world around us.

Lord Jesus, one day You will return.

Make us ready Lord.

Jesus said, "not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven". (Matthew 7:21)

Lord Jesus we need Your help to follow you faithfully each day. Please fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit so that we can hear you speaking to us, and then obeying what you say. We want to be a people who do the will of our Heavenly Father.

Lord Jesus, one day You will return.

Make us ready Lord.

Jesus said: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near." (Matthew 3:2)

Lord Jesus, help us to share the message of Your love with other people, giving them a chance to repent. Give us courage and boldness to declare all that you have done for us, and that You are reigning as Lord over all.

Lord Jesus, one day You will return.

Make us ready Lord.



Gathering all our prayers together we pray:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

Notices:

If your church gives out verbal notices my suggestion is that you do that just before the drama so that the flow of the service is unbroken.

Drama:

The aim of the drama is to send people home with the challenge: "Are you ready for Jesus' return?" It is called "Getting ready" and can be found in Appendix 4.

Final Song:

Advent song as per Appendix 1

Blessing:

Pray a simple prayer to end the service something like:

Go from here knowing that Jesus, our Lord and Saviour will return one day.

Be ready to welcome Him!

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you always. Amen.



Appendix 1 - Ideas for Songs and Hymns:

- i) A couple of Advent songs to draw people into worship. Ideas include:
 - At the name of Jesus (Caroline M. Noel)
 - Come, let us worship the King of Kings (Nathan Fellingham © 2001 Thankyou Music)
 - Glorious light (Keith & Kristyn Getty & Ian Hannah © 2004 Thankyou Music)
 - Light of the world (Tim Hughes © 2000 Thankyou Music)
 - Welcome King of Kings (Noel Richards © 1991 Kingsway's Thankyou Music)
 - We lift our voices to the Lord most high (Andy Clark © 2021 RESOUNDworship)
- ii) A song/s about Jesus arriving. Ideas include:
 - Blessed is the King who comes (Ian Smale © 1993 Thankyou Music)
 - I see the King of glory (Hosanna) (Brooke Ligertwood © 2006 Hillsong Music Publishing)
 - Lift up your heads to the coming King (Steve Fry © 1974 Birdwing Music)
 - Lo He comes with clouds descending (Charles Wesley)
 - Prepare the way of the Lord (Dave Bilbrough © 2000 Thankyou Music)
 - Prepare the way of the Lord (Mary Small © Mary Small)
 - Sound the trumpet (David Bilbrough © 1991 Thankyou Music)

iii) A song/s about holiness. Ideas include:

- Be still for the presence of the Lord (David J Evans © 1986 Thankyou Music)
- Dear Lord and Father of mankind (John G. Whittier)
- I want more of you (Chris Jackson © 2009 Powerpack)
- Jesus take away all my sin (Tony Phelps-Jones © 2005 Daybreak Music Ltd)
- Purify my heart (Brian Doerksen © 1990 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing)

iv) A song/s of surrender to Jesus. Ideas include:

- All to Jesus I surrender (J.W. van de Venter © HarperCollins Religious)
- Be the centre of my life Lord Jesus (Capt. Alan Price © 1990 Daybreak Music Ltd)
- Here I am down on my knees again (Matt Crocker © 2011 Hillsong Music Publishing Australia)
- Jesus be the centre (Michael Frye © 1999 Vineyard Songs)
- Jesus, Jesus here I am (Philip Hawthorne © 1988 Seadream Music)
- Jesus, You have called us (Joel Payne © 2021 RESOUNDworship)
- King of Kings, majesty (Jarrod Cooper © 1996 Sovereign Lifestyle Music)
- Jesus my King, my wonderful Saviour (Andy Bromley, J. M. Harris © 2005 Thankyou Music)

v) Advent song. Ideas include:

- God's saints of old (Ed Cash, Keith Getty and Stuart Townend © 2014 Gettymusic)
- Great is the darkness (Gerald Coates, Noel Richards © 1992 Thankyou Music)
- O come, O come Emmanuel (John Mason Neale, Thomas Helmore)
- Soon and very soon (Andraé Crouch © 1971 Bud John Songs, Inc.)
- There is a higher throne (Keith Getty & Kristyn Lennox © 2002 Thankyou Music)
- When I stand before your throne (Matt Redman, Tim Wanstall, Jonas Myrin & Chris Tomlin, Robert M. McCheyne © 2011 Thankyou music)



Appendix 2 – Dramatised Reading – Luke 3:2-14,18 (including Matthew 3:2)

Cast: Narrator, John the Baptist, Isaiah, 2 people, Tax collector (TC), Soldier (S)

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Enter Narrator

Narrator: The word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all

the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the

forgiveness of sins.

(Enters John from back of the church shouting, walking towards the front of church – ends up standing in front of the congregation)

John: Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near.

Narrator: As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

(Enter Isaiah who could speak from a pulpit, if you have one, or who stands alongside John at the front)

Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness,

'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth.

And all people will see God's salvation.' "

Narrator: John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him:

(People walk up the centre of the church and stop in front of John)

John: You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit

in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that

does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

People: What should we do then?

John: Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone

who has food should do the same.

Narrator: Even tax collectors came to be baptized.

(Enter Tax Collector who walks up the centre of the church and stops in front of John)

TC: Teacher, what should we do?

John: Don't collect any more than you are required to.

Narrator: Then some soldiers asked him,

(Enter Soldier who walks up the centre of the church and stops in front of John)

S: And what should we do?

John: Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.

Narrator: With many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to

them.

Scripture quotations taken from The NIV Study Bible, Copyright © 1985, 1995, 2002, 2008, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.



Appendix 3 - Puppet Script - "Produce good fruit"

Characters:



The script is a dialogue between a young boy puppet called "James" who wants to follow Jesus but keeps getting things wrong, and his wise old "Grandad" puppet who helps to sort him out. James is dressed in a hessian tunic (made simply from a piece of hessian with a hole in the middle and some string around the middle – see photo). Each puppet is operated by one person from behind a screen and so it is essential that the voices are heard; radio-microphones are ideal. Puppets and puppet screens can be purchased from many sources including http://www.onewayuk.com/

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Enter Grandad

Grandad: James, James, where are you?

Enter James dressed in a hessian tunic

James: Here I am Grandad

Grandad: Wow.....I like the new outfit James.....is it a new fashion?

James: No Grandad, I am dressing up to look like John the Baptist

Grandad: I see. So, have you had some honey on your toast this morning?

James: I don't like honey Grandad

Grandad: Perhaps locusts would suit your taste better then....

James: Oh cool....yes I'd love to try a locust....I wonder how you cook locust

Grandad: Somehow, I don't think that your mother would be too keen on cooking locusts for

tea James. Tell me, why are you dressed up like John the Baptist?

James: We have been learning about John the Baptist in Sunday school Grandad. I have a

loud voice too, so I thought I could be like him and say to everyone I meet (shouting),

"PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD."

Grandad: That is a loud voice!

James: I have already baptised my hamster in the sink and was just about to baptise the

goldfish when you called me....although I was wondering how I would hold him as he

is so slippery.

Grandad: Oh dear.....perhaps it might be more helpful for us to spend some time together

and think about some of the things that John said.

James: But John was talking to tax collectors and soldiers Grandad, and I am neither of

those.

Grandad: He also talked to ordinary people like you and me James, and what he said all those

years ago is still true today.

James: So, what did John the Baptist tell the people?

Grandad: John told people that when they had confessed their sins, they had to live differently.

James: How do you mean differently?

Grandad: They had to live to please God, and not themselves. John said that the things that

they did would show whether anything had actually changed in their hearts or not.

James: Oh

Grandad: So, when John spoke to the tax collectors, he told them to be honest with money and

not to take more from people than they should.

James: Oh dear

Grandad: What's the matter James?

James: I am feeling rather guilty....

Grandad: Come on James....what have you done?

James: When I went down to the sweet shop earlier today, I bought a Mars bar. I handed

the lady a five-pound note, and do you know what?

Grandad: No, go on.....

James: (speaking incredulously) Well the lady gave me back nineteen pounds and forty pence in

change.....she thought I had given her a twenty-pound note. I was thinking, what a wonderful sweet shop.....you get given free sweets and loads of money.....but now I

am starting to feel rather guilty.

Grandad: That's good....because I'm thinking about the poor lady who works in the sweet

shop. When she comes to add up the money tonight from the till and discovers that

she is fifteen pounds short, she will probably have to pay for that herself.

James: ohhhhhh

Grandad: And at this time of year when we are all saving up to buy Christmas presents, losing

that amount of money will be hard for her.

James: Oh, dear Grandad what should I do?

Grandad: Well why don't I go back to the sweet shop with you and we will return the money

together.....I think that the lady will be very pleased with your honesty.

James: Do you think so Grandad? I'm sorry.....I didn't think that it mattered.

Grandad: It does matter James, and I am so glad that John the Baptist's words spoke to you.



James: So am I Grandad.

Grandad: John also said some stuff about sharing and about being happy with what you

have.....

James: Thanks Grandad....let's talk about that another time as I must go and add something

to my Christmas "wants" list. I don't want to forget to add locusts to the top of it......

I really would love to have a few.

Grandad: Oh James!

Exit James and Grandad

Appendix 4 - Drama: Getting Ready

Cast: Father (F),

Mother (M), Son (S),

off-stage voice (Voice)

Props: You will need the following props:

• Apron for mother.

- Mixing bowl, spoon and recipe book on a table.
- Roll of wrapping paper, Sellotape, some unwrapped gifts, a "gift list" which could be the script on another table for the father.
- A length of fairy lights for the son and a way to plug these lights in.
- A metronome which will play throughout the drama until the end. It will need to be amplified so that it sounds loud. You will need someone to be increasing the speed of the metronome throughout the drama at certain points and then to switch it off.

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Set the metronome going at a medium speed eg. 92

Enter Mother wearing an apron. She stands behind the table, picks up the wooden spoon, and mimes mixing something in the bowl. Her script can be in the recipe book propped open for her to see.

M: It's Christmas Eve and time is running out. I've still got so much to do.

Stuff the turkey, peel the potatoes, prepare the veg, prepare the pudding. I wish I hadn't left it so late to get all of this ready.....maybe going to all those parties

wasn't such a good idea....why haven't I learnt my lesson from last year?

I'm sure that I have forgotten something. (Keeps mixing) It's the stuffing.....I knew it... I've forgotten the stuffing. I wonder if any shops are open this late....oh no....time is

running out.

Increase metronome speed to 120.

Enter Father carrying a few unwrapped gifts. Mother freezes.

D: It's Christmas Eve and time is running out. I've still got so much to do.

I had hoped to have all these presents wrapped by now, but there have been so many good films on television that just had to be watched. Where's the scissors?

(Walks around looking for scissors, then goes back to the table)

Oh well, I'll just have to rip the paper.....I'm sure no-one will notice. (Rips a piece of wrapping paper and starts to wrap a present). How am I possibly going to get all these presents wrapped in time? The children will be awake in a couple of hours and there is a pile three feet deep in the other room waiting to be wrapped. I wish I had started

earlier....oh no.....time is running out.

Increase metronome speed to 144.

Enter Son carrying a few unwrapped gifts. Father freezes.

S: It's Christmas Eve and time is running out. I've still got so much to do.

Dad thinks that I am the techie in this household and so I have been given the job of fixing all of the Christmas lights.....I've left it a few days because I needed to catch up on my sleep....but now, you wouldn't believe the grief mum and dad are giving me because the lights aren't working. Hmmm, let's start with these lights. (Looks at the lights) Let's just twiddle each of these bulbs like so....now we plug in. (Plugs in the lights but they don't light up) I think that these lights need a new fuse....but I guess it's a bit late to try and sort that out now....oh no.....time is running out.



Son Freezes and metronome stops

M: That's strange.....it's nearly midnight and yet it is brilliant daylight outside

D: Oh wow.....the whole sky looks like it is on fire!

S: I can hear a loud trumpet

M: What is happening? (Freezes)

D: I don't(Freezes)

S: Er....(Freezes)

Voice: "Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come."

Will you be ready?