

**Christmas Eve for the Christian Household** by *David B. Batchelder*

**Why is this Faith Practice Important?**

With the rushing of preparation or shopping, Christmas symbols in our homes can be neglected. David B. Batchelder, in his book *All Through the Day, All Through the Year*, invites Christian households to truly claim Christmas Eve.

Simple blessings and activities (candles, creche, meal) can deepen spirituality for individuals and families.



**Materials Needed**

- Advent wreath and Christ candle
- Bells (the kind that look like sleigh bells)
- Creche or nativity scene
- A simple supper

**How to Do it**

**Ring the Bells and Light Candles:** Before lighting any candle, we shake a set of sleigh bells so their sound echoes throughout the house. The bells have not been heard since last December 24th, but it is time to announce the transition from Advent to Christmas. In our home, the bell ringing is a high honor that must be shared among our children from year to year. After the bells, we light all the Advent wreath candles – the Christ candle last.

**Place the Baby Jesus in the Creche:** It is time to place the baby Jesus in the manger. For this occasion, it would be good for a child to read – or have read to him or her – the Christmas story from the Gospel of Luke (2:1-7), using a favorite version of the Bible or a children’s Bible. When the figure of the baby Jesus is placed in the manger, a prayer, such as the one on the next page, might be prayed in unison.

**Christmas Eve Meal:** This is not an evening to fuss over elaborate dinner or one that will suffer from waiting for the ritual’s completion. When we are seated for the Christmas Eve meal, one or all of us offer a prayer suited to the occasion.

## Resources for this Practice

### When ringing the bells

*"Noel! Christ is born for us!" speaks a child.*

*"Noel! O come, let us adore him!" reply the rest of us.*

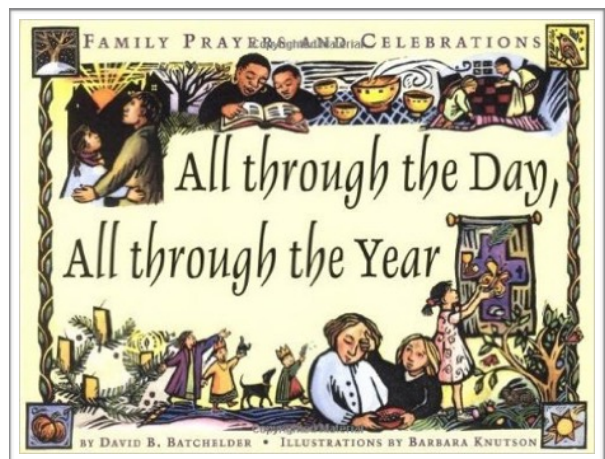
### Prayer for placing Jesus in the creche

*Marvelous God who fills this night with wonder,  
We have arrived to welcome Jesus' birth.  
With cattle and shepherds we honor your gift.  
May his presence warm our hearts  
with tenderness enough for everyone we meet.  
And keep us always in your joy.  
Amen.*

### Prayer for Christmas Eve meal

*Jesus our Savior, You are welcome here.  
With animals and angels we sing your praise.  
Fill us with joy for your gifts of love,  
given to all who hunger and thirst for your salvation.  
Warm our table with your presence  
that this meal may be a taste of all good things to come.  
Through Jesus Christ, the light of the world.  
Amen.*

*All Through the Day, All Through the Year* by  
David B. Batchelder, Augsburg Books 2000  
(Out of print, but available used)



## About the Author

*David B. Batchelder is the pastor at West Plano Presbyterian Church in Texas. He is the author of numerous articles on worship and liturgy. He is also a husband and father of four children.*