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"This is Advent: Joy"

By
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- What** Like the Wise Men, it sometimes feels like there's a whole desert of dryness to travel before landing in the joy of Christmas. An advent reading reminds us that joy is ahead of us and that Jesus goes before us. Part of the *This is Advent* series, readings that will help your church experience the heart of Christmas all over again.
- Themes: Christmas, Joy, Advent, Home, Dreams, Encouragement, Disappointment, Overcoming, Reader's Theatre
- Who** Reader 1
Reader 2
Reader 3
- When** Present Day
- Costumes** Wear the clothing you'd wear to church on any other Sunday
- Props** Jar filled with sand
Candle
Lighter
- Why** Hebrews 12:1-3; Psalm 36:7-9
- How** Both a Reader's Theater version and a Monologue version are provided. Can be memorized or read off the page directly to the audience. Use black folders and/or music stands if not memorized but be familiar with the text for better audience connection.
- Time** Approximately 3 minutes

Reader's Theater Version

**Performance notes: If you are reading, read the script with emotion, in a way that's true to you. It's important to be yourself. Don't be afraid to take your time. Readers should look at the audience and at their fellow co-Readers.*

Reader 1 holds up jar of sand.

Reader 1: This is a soul. *(hold up the jar of sand)*

Reader 2: At least sometimes this is how it looks and how it feels.

Reader 3: Dry, like a desert.

Reader 2: Thirsty and in need of joy.

Reader 1: Sometimes I feel like my life is the second half of that dream Joseph interprets for Pharaoh. You know, when all the skinny little cows appear and eat up all the fat ones. I want abundance, but everything feels scarce.

Reader 2: I'm so grateful for how, even when my soul feels dry, that God whispers words into my heart. Like a scene in a nature documentary when it finally rains in a desert, and out of nowhere, a flower blooms.

Reader 3: It's at times like these, when I feel dry, that I turn to God's word. If my soul feels like a desert then God's word prompts me to imagine that the dryness is just the miles and miles of sand that the Israelites walked before they entered the Promised Land.

Reader 1: If my spiritual life feels dry, then I imagine it's dry like the starkly beautiful dunes the Wise Men traveled across on their way to meet the Messiah.

Reader 2: If you're walking through a difficult season, be encouraged today. You're not alone. Others have walked the journey before. The desert ends!

Reader 3: Think of those Wise Men.

Reader 1: They must have doubted themselves. Some night, when they set camp, half way between the Eastern land they called home and the foreign place they hoped to worship Heaven's king. Away from all their comforts. Pitching tents in the desert.

Reader 3: The threat of jackals and other animals, the threat of thieves.

Reader 1: They were on their way to one of the most joyful experiences of their lives, but they had difficult, unfamiliar terrain to travel through first.

Reader 2: If Christmas feels different this year because of the circumstances you're going through, if you feel like you are going through tough terrain, please take heart, my friend.

Reader 3: Your Savior set out on a journey too. His earthly life was even more of a dangerous adventure than the journey of the Wise Men. He left all the comforts of heaven to make a way for you.

Reader 2: He came to earth with so much joy set before Him, even though it included a cross.

Reader 1: "For the joy set out for Him he endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God."

Take a moment to let the words land with the audience.

Reader 3: This Advent season, even if you feel far away from the joy of Christmas, remember the example of those who have walked before us. Of Israel, to the Promised Land. The Wise Men to Bethlehem. Jesus, from the manger to the cross.

Reader 2 *lights the candle.*

Reader 1: Today, as we light the candle of Advent, let us especially remember our Savior Jesus, and the difficult journey He made so we can *all* know true joy.

All: Amen.

Lights fade to end the play.

Monologue Version

**Performance notes: embrace the sentiments of the text to best connect with your audience. Play with speeds, slowing down moments that resonate with you and speed up areas where you feel the fire. Be a wind chime through which the Spirit moves and makes some sweet noise.*

Actor:

This is a soul. *(hold up the jar of sand)*

At least sometimes this is how it looks and how it feels.

Dry, like a desert. Thirsty and in need of joy. Sometimes I feel like my life is the second half of that dream Joseph interprets for Pharaoh. You know, when all the skinny little cows appear and eat up all the fat ones. I want abundance, but everything feels scarce.

I'm so grateful for how, even when my soul feels dry, that God whispers words into my heart. Like a scene in a nature documentary when it finally rains in a desert and out of nowhere a flower blooms.

It's at times like these, when I feel dry, that I turn to God's word. If my soul feels like a desert then God's word prompts me to imagine that the dryness is just the miles and miles of sand that the Israelites walked before they entered the Promised Land.

If my spiritual life feels dry, then I imagine it's dry like the starkly beautiful dunes the Wise Men traveled across on their way to meet the Messiah.

If you're walking through a difficult season, be encouraged today. You're not alone. Others have walked the journey before. The desert ends!

I think of those Wise Men. They must have doubted themselves. Some night, when they set camp, half way between the Eastern land they called home and the foreign place they hoped to worship Heaven's king. Away from all their comforts. Pitching tents in the desert. The threat of jackals and other animals, the threat of thieves.

They were on their way to one of the most joyful experiences of their lives, but they had difficult, unfamiliar terrain to travel through first.

If Christmas feels different this year because of the circumstances you're going through, if you feel like you are going through tough terrain, please take heart my friend.

Your Savior set out on a journey too. His earthly life was even more of a dangerous adventure than the journey of the Wise Men. He left all the comforts of heaven to make a way for you.

He came to earth with so much joy set before Him, even though it included a cross.

"For the joy set out for Him he endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God."

Take a moment to let the words land with the audience.

This Advent season, even if you feel far away from the joy of Christmas, remember the example of those who have walked before us. Of Israel, to the Promised Land. The Wise Men to Bethlehem. Jesus, from the manger to the cross.

Actor *lights the candle.*

Today, as we light the candle of Advent, let us especially remember our Savior Jesus, and the difficult journey He made so we can *all* know true joy.

Lights fade to end play.