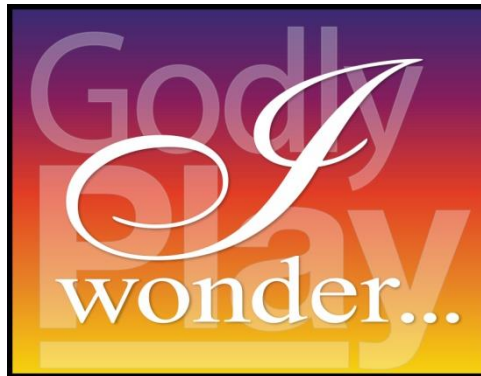


Stories of God at Home

The Advent Story



This story will be shared over the four weeks of Advent, in order to allow us time and a way to get ready to enter into the Mystery of Christmas.

Part 4



In the Church there are four weeks to get ready to enter into the Mystery of Christmas called the season of Advent. You know, a mystery is hard to enter into sometimes, so that is why this time of Advent is so important.

The Church learned a long time ago that people need a way to get ready to enter or even come close to a mystery like Christmas. The Church set aside four weeks to get ready. This is such a great Mystery that it takes that long to get ready. During this time, we are all on the way to Bethlehem. We are all making the journey. We are all getting ready to enter the Mystery of Christmas

This is week four of the Godly Play Advent story which is being shared to prepare us to enter into the Mystery of Christmas. This week you can share in the story by uploading a recording from Sharon, a Godly Play storyteller. We suggest that you watch the video each week with your family or your class, and then use the support material provided alongside the videos.

Each weekly recording will pick up from the previous week and come together to tell the full story that will lead us into the Christmas Season.

We also suggest that you use your Advent Wreath as part of the storytelling experience – lighting one candle per week, and maybe you could reflect upon your crib at home or in the class room as you wonder.

Godly Play Advent Story - Week Four **The Magi**

As you get ready to enter into the Mystery of Christmas, it is so important that you prepare to listen to and watch the Advent Story unfold, and to be reminded of the language of silence. A silence that appears between the words as the lesson is spoken, as you listen to the words, as you watch the movement of materials and the light that begins to fill out the story with the presence of God amongst you. The world can be often overcrowded with words and ideas, so many things compete for your attention, so making room to just “be” and to hear God’s “still and gentle voice” is an invaluable practice to learn together.

Watch the Video here:



The Spoken Lesson

This is the storyteller's script – it is provided here to allow you to reflect upon the written word and maybe retell the story as often as you like during the first week of Advent.

During this time, we are all on the way to Bethlehem. We are all making the journey. We are all getting ready to enter the Mystery of Christmas, so let's go with the prophets, the Holy Family, the shepherds, the angels, the Magi and all the rest to make the journey that was not just back then. It is also now.

In the first week of Advent we remembered the Prophets. This is the card of the Prophets. Prophets are people who come so close to God, and God comes so close to them, that they know what is most important. They pointed the way to Bethlehem. They didn't know exactly what was going to happen there, but they knew this was the place.

Here is the hand of a prophet pointing the way to Bethlehem, showing us the way, too. Stop. Watch. Pay attention. Something incredible is going to happen in Bethlehem.

In the second week of Advent we remembered the Holy Family. This is the card of the Holy Family. Do you see Bethlehem on the card, and the road? The Holy Family is on the way to Bethlehem and we are going with them. Here is the Mother Mary. Here is the Father Joseph. Here is the Donkey.

Mary was about to have a baby. It is very hard to walk when you are about to have a baby. Sometimes she could not take another step. Then she rode on the donkey. She rode and she walked. Joseph was with her. On the fourth Sunday of Advent, we hear in the Gospel Mary's 'Yes'. These two must have been the last people coming up the road to Bethlehem that night.

In the third week of Advent we remembered the shepherds who were standing in the fields around Bethlehem keeping their sheep. They were trying to stay awake so the wolves could not come and get the sheep. Suddenly there was so much light in the sky that it hurt their eyes. They were afraid. Their hearts were beating so loudly. When they could hear something besides their own hearts, they thought they heard singing in the sky! That also scared them until they heard the words of the song. The angels were singing "Don't be afraid". Angels often say that because it is scary to have a messenger of God come to you. The angels singing sounded something like this: 'Don't be afraid. We bring you tidings of great joy. Peace on earth and good will to everyone. A child is born. Go. Hurry. Run to Bethlehem to see the Child who will change everything'

In the fourth week of Advent we remember the three kings, the Magi, the wise men. They came from far in the East, and they were so wise that people thought they were magic. We get our word magic from the name they were called in their own language, "the Magi".

Of all the things they knew, they knew the most about the stars. They knew where each star was supposed to be at each time of year, so they could tell people when it was time to plant their crops or take a trip on the ocean, or cross the high mountain passes when the snow wasn't too deep.

Suddenly they saw a wild star. It was not on any of their star maps. It went where it wanted to go. It did not stay put. They decided to follow the wild star to see where it was going and what it wanted to show them. They followed the star all the way to Bethlehem, but they came from so far away that they got there after the baby was born. They are always late it seems. Every year they are late. They usually don't arrive until January 6th, but we remember them anyway because, like us they too are on the way to Bethlehem.

Here is the candle of the prophets.
This is the candle of the Holy Family.
Here is the candle of the shepherds.
Here is the candle of the wise men.
Let's enjoy the light.

Look! When you come to the mystery of Christmas, everything changes. It becomes the colour of pure celebration. This is when the baby is born, the one we have been waiting for.

Emmanuel was his name – a name meaning God is with us
Here is the Christ Child, here is Emmanuel, the mystery of Christmas.

This is amazing, but of all the creatures there that night, perhaps the most amazed was the old cow. When the old cow came up to the feed box in the morning to eat some straw it found a baby lying in the manger. Someone had put a soft cover over the straw. The manger had become a bed, All the old cow could do was look and look at the baby with its big brown eyes.

Wait! Something is missing! I wonder what it could be?
This is the Christ candle.
Now, let's enjoy its light, too.

Now watch. I am going to change the light. Now I am going to change the light of the Christ candle. Look. It too is spreading out to fill up the room. As it spreads out, it gets thinner and thinner until you can't see it at all. That doesn't mean that it's gone. It only means that you can't see it. You can still feel the Christmas light. It is filling up the room with the prophets, the Holy Family, the shepherds and the three kings. Anywhere you go, you can come close to them.

{Advent Wreath -Light both the two purple candles of the Prophets & the Holy Family, the pink candle of the Shepherds & the purple candle of the Magi}.



Maybe on Christmas Eve, you could listen to the story again and light the white candle - the Christ Candle, as you meet the child, and fully enter into and experience the Mystery of Christmas}



Wondering

As you wonder as a family or group, practice truly listening to each other without feeling the need to validate or dispute a wondering. There is no right or wrong way to wonder, instead this time sets up a safe space to express and listen to each other.

So, are you ready to Wonder?

1. *I wonder what your favourite part of the story is.*
2. *I wonder what the wise men thought when they saw the wild star that didn't behave as any other star they'd ever known.*
3. *I wonder what questions they asked themselves about it. I wonder how they felt when they didn't know where the star was leading them.*
4. *I wonder how the cow felt.*
5. *I wonder how Mary and Joseph felt*
6. *I wonder in what ways you are getting ready to meet the Christ Child.*

Response Time

Response time is the child's/young person's opportunity to respond to what they have heard/seen/felt in the story through their own creative efforts.

Feast

After the response is the time to come back together to share a small feast. The feast is more than a snack but it signifies coming together, in communion with each other, indirectly preparing for or recreating the sacrament of Holy Communion. Everyone waits until all are served before they begin to eat and drink. This can be a time to truly share with each other, to talk about the story, how your day or week went, a time to laugh, to cry with one another. A time to be together.

An Advent Prayer

Circle us, Lord. Circle our home/school with Advent love and hope.

Create a desire to listen to the Advent message.

Create a willingness to understand and respond.

Create a need to reach out to the Christ Child.

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation

Circle our home/school with the light of your presence

