

Heartland Friends Meeting

Christmas Story script adapted from Godly Play

Setting: Electric lights are dimmed and candles are lit along one wall of the meeting room. Children are invited to sit on the floor in the center around a small glass table with a 5-candle candelabra. The candles are waiting to be lighted during the story.

Children and adults have a “program” with the words of the prophet, the angel and the magi to be spoken out loud in chorus during the story. Most children have been practicing these words at home. Adults are invited to join the children when they proclaim these words during the story.

An adult narrator reads the story (with a measured and reverent cadence) and another adult lights and snuffs the candles.

This is a special night! On this night, every year, we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Jesus, who came to earth 2,000 years ago and who comes into our hearts today. This is a mystery ... how something that happened so very long ago can still be happening today.

Tonight we enter the Mystery of Christmas. We will journey with all the people who walked from different places to be together on that first Christmas night. So let's go with the prophets, with Mary and Joseph, with the shepherds, and the Magi as they journey to Bethlehem.

Prophets are people who come so close to God, and God comes so close to them, that they know what is most important. The prophets pointed the way to Bethlehem thousands of years ago. They didn't know exactly what was going to happen there, but they knew that Bethlehem was the place. Listen to the words of the prophet:

Children, in chorus: *(Isaiah 11:6)*

The wolf will dwell with the lamb,

The leopard will lay down beside the kid,

The calf and the lion cub will play together

And a little child will lead them.

(Light the candle of the prophets.)

This is the light of the prophets. The light that leads all of us to Bethlehem.

When the father Joseph and the mother Mary journeyed to Bethlehem on that first Christmas Eve they had been walking nearly a week. Mary was about to have a baby. It is very hard to walk when you are about to have a baby, so sometimes she rode the donkey. It is also hard to ride a donkey when you are about to have a baby, so sometimes she walked beside Joseph and the donkey.

Joseph and Mary must have been the last people coming up the road to Bethlehem that night.

(Light the candle of the holy family.)

This is the light of the Holy Family as they walk up the road to Bethlehem.

On that first Christmas night there were shepherds in the fields outside Bethlehem, watching their sheep, keeping them safe from the wolves. It was late at night, and very dark. Suddenly, there was a bright light in the sky ... so bright that the shepherds were afraid. They kneeled down close to the ground and hid their eyes.

But then, they heard singing. When they looked up, there were angels in the sky. And, the angel's song went something like this:

Children, in chorus:

Don't be afraid.

We bring you good news!

A baby is born!

A baby who will change everything!

So, hurry!

Run to Bethlehem and see the baby!

So, the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem to see the baby of the angels' song. (*Light the candle of the shepherds.*)

This is the light of the shepherds as they run over the hills to Bethlehem.

Far, far away in the East there were three kings who were very wise. They were so wise that people thought they were magic. In fact, we get our word “magic” from the name they were called in their language, “Magi.”

Of all the things the Magi knew, they knew the most about the stars. They knew where each star was supposed to be at every time of the year. By looking at the stars, they knew when it was time for the people to plant their seeds; and when it was a good time to make a journey on the ocean or walk across the snowy mountains.

One night the Magi were studying the stars when they saw a new star that acted very strange. It was brighter than all the other stars, and it moved in a strange way. The Magi watched this strange star, and wondered about it. Then, they said:

Children, in chorus:

Look!

This star wants to show us something!

Let’s follow this star and see where it leads us.

(Light the candle of the Magi.) Here is the light of the Magi, who followed the strange, bright star all the way to Bethlehem.

We have one more candle to light ... the light of the Baby Jesus, who was born in the stable on that first Christmas night. There was no furniture in the stable ... no bed for the baby. So Mary put Jesus on the soft hay in the manger. This little baby, born on that dark night, is the Light that changed everything! (***Light the Christ candle.***)

Now, watch what happens when we change the light. See how the light is in just this place right now?

(Pause the narration while the candle of the prophets is snuffed)

Now the light is getting thinner and thinner.

(Pause while the candle of the holy family is snuffed.)

The light is spreading all over the room.

(Pause while the candles of the shepherds and Magi are snuffed.)

Even when we can't see the light any more, we know it is there.

The lights of the prophets, the Holy Family, the shepherds and the Magi are all around us wherever we go.

Here is the light of the Baby Jesus, in this one place right now. ***(Pause while the candle is snuffed.)*** Now, the Light of Jesus, also, is getting thinner and thinner, disappearing from our sight, mixing with the lights of the prophets, the Holy Family, the shepherds, and the Magi.

All of the Light is around us wherever we go.

When we remember this story, we can feel the very special light of God's love inside us.

Before we enter into quiet worship, let's light our candles again so we can be reminded of all the light God has given us:

- The light of the prophets - who knew that something very important was going to happen in Bethlehem.
- The light of Joseph and Mary - who said "yes" to God, even though they didn't understand exactly what was going to happen to them.
- The light of the shepherds - who followed the angels' instructions and found the baby.
- The light of the Magi - who followed an amazing, bright star that led them to Jesus
- The Light of the Baby ... the Light of Christ ... the Light that God has given to each one of us.



Listen to the words of the prophet:

The wolf will dwell with the lamb.

The leopard will lay down beside the kid.

**The calf and the lion cub will play
together.**

And a little child will lead them.

The angel's song went something like this:

Don't be afraid.

We bring you good news!

A baby is born!

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So, hurry!

Run to Bethlehem and see the baby!

The Magi watched this strange star, and wondered about it.

Then, they said:

Look!

This star wants to show us something!

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leads us.**