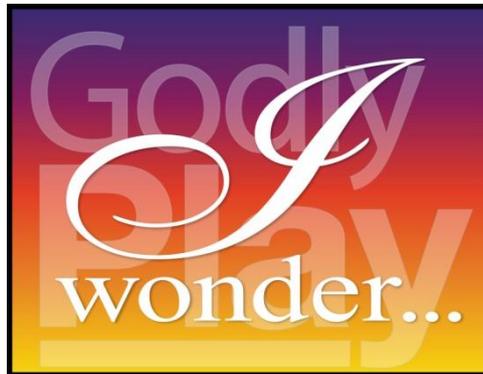


Stories of God at Home

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 3



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 three of the Godly Play Advent story which is being shared over the course of four weeks. Each week we will be sharing 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 Three **The Shepherds**

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.

Prophets are people who come so close to God, and God comes so close to them, that they know what is most important. John the Baptist was the last prophet. They pointed the way to Bethlehem. On the third Sunday of Advent we hear in the Gospel John ask Jesus, "Are you the one that we have been waiting for?" to which Jesus replied, "Everyone who believes in me will be blessed".

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

This is 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. It is also hard to ride on a donkey when you are about to have a baby. She couldn't ride another step, she got down and walked. She rode and she walked. They must have been the last people coming up the road to Bethlehem that night.

This third week of Advent is the time of the Shepherds. In this time we remember the shepherds who were standing in the fields around Bethlehem keeping their sheep.

The Shepherds 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'

Here is the candle of the Prophets.

This is the candle of the Holy Family.

Here is the candle of the Shepherds.

Look – there is something different about this candle. It is the colour of roses. This is to remind us of the great joy the angels sang of. It also helps us to remember that even if it is very serious to get ready to come close to the mystery of Christmas, you can't be serious all of the time as you get ready.

This is the week when it is time for a little celebration! Let's enjoy the light.

Now watch. I am going to change the light. Do you see how the light is not gone? It is changed. It is not in one place. Now it is spreading out, getting thinner and thinner, to fill up the whole room. The room is filling up with the light of the prophets and with the light of the mother Mary and the father Joseph. Anywhere you go in this room you can come close to them today.

{Advent Wreath -Light both the two purple lights of the Prophets & the Holy Family and the pink light of the Shepherds}



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 if any one of you have seen or heard mysterious things.*
- 2. I wonder if you have ever felt that God was talking to you through a messenger.*
- 3. I wonder in what other ways you might hear God's message.*
- 4. I wonder in what other ways you could wonder about the Shepherds call.*
- 5. I wonder if there are special things you might do at your house to joyously celebrate what Christmas is really all about.*

Response Time

This part of the Godly Play process is sometimes called “the work period”; the child’s work is really deep and personal play. This is the time to continue to respond to the story through some form of creative expression. You may want to work together or individually. As with the Wondering, there is no right or wrong play during this creative phase. Have some art materials, some paper and crayons, or whatever materials you have at home, set up and ready to use. 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. Have some small treats and drinks prepared beforehand. 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 for Courage

Dear Heavenly Father,
Help me to hear your voice.
Touch me once again.
Give me the courage to be your beloved.
Give me courage to choose joy.
I need you now this Christmas.
Be born in me again.
Today.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

