

Christmas Eve

December 24th

This is it, the preparations are all done, and we gather this evening to greet and welcome the Christ child. We are not a "perfect" people but we know from this story and the stories that grow from here, you are loved, you are enough and you are beautiful with God's beauty.

Prayer

Lighting the Advent Candles

Today we light the white candle, the Christ Candle. It reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world and has come to live with us today and always.

Light all of the candles and sit for a moment of silence.

Christ our Light,
Thank you for coming into the world,
for being born as a baby,
and for reminding us that we are never alone.
Amen.

Prayer

Opening

As we begin, we light the single candle and say,
Jesus Christ is the light of the world.
A light no darkness can extinguish.

Gathering

God of all Creation, what do you require of us?
To do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God
To do justice, seeking peace & reconciliation, standing with those who are forgotten.
To love kindness, showing compassion and unconditional caring for those in need.
To walk humbly, following in the steps of Jesus, not looking for praise for our own work but giving praise to you.

C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S
L	O	V	E	T	M	A	W	H
S	O	N	G	A	E	R	N	E
H	T	G	G	R	U	Y	C	P
E	A	I	J	O	S	E	P	H
E	N	F	O	V	T	B	E	E
P	G	T	Y	P	R	O	A	R
J	E	S	U	S	A	R	C	D
S	L	B	I	U	W	N	E	N

HOPE
PEACE
JOY
LOVE
BORN
JESUS
STAR
MARY
JOSEPH
MAGI
GIFT
ANGEL
SONG
SHEEP
OX
SHEPHERD
STRAW
CHRISTMAS

Draw your favourite part of the Christmas story.

Story

Welcome baaaack! My name is *Ongoza*, your friendly and bashful sheep. Yes, I am cute and cuddly, and I provide many necessities for our shepherds. Can you think of any? Here are three: wool (to keep you warm), meat (to fill your belly) and fertilizer (for food and plant growth). You've met my friends Rafiq, Kawvaw, Gabriel, Chara and Raham. You've read their stories and heard the gifts they provide for their communities and how their names speak on the beautiful themes of Advent. My name means *lead* and I am sooo excited to lead you to an amazing event!

One night, I was with my family and friends along the mountain range, minding my business and enjoying some delicious sweet grass, when suddenly a bright light covered the night sky! Soooo bright that I could not make out the figure, but I heard the words, *that in Bethlehem, a child is born wrapped in cloth and lying in a feeding trough*. Question for you, why is there a kid in our dinner?! *This child*, continued the voice, *is the promised Messiah*. When the voice stopped talking, I heard more voices giving God glory for this miracle. Personally, a child in my food is nothing special nor tasty!

My shepherd was so amazed and excited that he rushed us to this spot. I skipped as fast as my little legs could move. As we got closer to this manger, I saw more of my friends.... Rafiq and Kawvaw...Gabriel, Chara and Raham!! Wow...this was quite a sight. In my excitement on seeing my buddies, I almost did not notice the silence and that every creature...I mean every creature had its head bowed. Many went to the lengths of kneeling! Odd... What's the reason? Even my shepherd was on his knees. Is there royalty around?! What is a Messiah?

I was able to wriggle through the herds and flocks and the many, many people until I was able to get a glimpse of the child. The closer I got, the more excited I became! Then I was nose to nose with the baby. There was and is something special about this boy. At that moment, I began to understand the silence, the bowing, the voices in the sky speaking of this beautiful miracle. I began to understand that I am face to face with royalty, our Shepherd, our Maker, our Immanuel. He is the promised One to lead us!

Engage

Have you ever looked to the sky at night and been amazed by its beauty?
What are some of the things you have seen? Constellations? Milky Way?
Meteor? Aurora Borealis?
How would you feel if you were with the sheep and heard the message from the Angel?
What is the most important part of the story we hear tonight?
What are you going to share about this story?

Prayer

Closing Blessing

The following can be taught as an action prayer. Make a cross with two pointer fingers at the word 'Christ'. Then point to the body part indicated, and make a motion which signifies looking, listening, making etc.

Christ be in our eyes and in our looking,
Christ be in our ears and in our listening,
Christ be in our hands and in our making,
Christ be in our minds and in our understanding,
Christ be in our hearts and in our loving.

Attributions:

Opening prayer adapted from *Living Justice: While We Wait*
Candle prayers adapted from Sadlier Religion
Closing blessing from Garry J. Deverell, www.deverell.net