

The Work of Christmas

Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks,

The work of Christmas begins:

- To find the lost,
- To heal the broken,
- To feed the hungry,
- To release the prisoner,
- To rebuild the nations,
- To bring peace among brothers and sisters,
- To make music in the heart.

Adapted from a piece created by Wellesley Friends Meeting.
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Christmas Light

Seeking in the Spirit of the Season

Christmas Queries

On Simplicity:

In this time of commercialism, how do you reflect values of simplicity? In what ways do you and your family reflect on the significance of Jesus' life and his teachings regarding simplicity? Is your gift giving in line with these values? Have you been able to find rituals that enhance the experience of the Inner Light?

On Peace:

At this time of year, there is more attention given to "Peace on Earth." Is there significance in the birth of Jesus, the "Prince of Peace" that calls us to actively seek peace? What do you do to promote peace in the world? Are you able to find inner peace in the midst of everyday business? Do you walk gently and peacefully on the Earth, seeking that of God in others and in nature?

On Light:

In this time of winter darkness and cold, where do you find Light in your Life? As the shepherds waited for the good news, do you wait with an open heart for revelation? How do you and your family seek the Light and share it with others? Have you been able to find rituals that enhance the experience of the Inner Light?

On Preparation:

How does your family get ready for Christmas? What do you wish your family did around Christmas? At what age did you start giving presents to other people? Did someone work on them with you?

Friends' Suggestions for Savoring Christmastime at Home:

- Trim the tree, light the lights, turn off the lights in the house and gather as a family to sing carols.
- Visit "shut-in" neighbors with plates of cookies.
- Celebrate the darkest day with a special after-dark walk, come home and light a yule log.
- Make homemade gifts for family with the help of a parent.
- Read Truman Capote's A Christmas Memory. 1956.
- Listen to "Amahl and the Night Visitors."
- Read Take Joy: The Tasha Tudor Christmas Book.
- Read A Christmas Carol. Charles Dickens.
- Read Eight stories on Hanukkah: The Power of Light.
- Read The Best Christmas. Lee Kingman. on spirit of giving.

Reading the Christmas Story at Home

Children love to hear the Christmas story read aloud. You can use a Children's Bible or regular translation and make short explanations as needed. The version of the Christmas story you probably remember comes from Luke.

You may want to organize them into short Advent services with a short reading, the lighting of a candle, and a Christmas carol. You can name the candles in a variety of ways and children often like to help choose which name to use.

Begin 4 Sundays before Christmas lighting Candle 1. Each subsequent week, light the preceding candles and the new one.

Candle 1 (Prophecy, Prince of Peace)

Isaiah 9.2-6.

"O Come, O Come Emmanuel"

Candle 2 (Bethlehem, Joseph)

Luke 2.1-7

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Candle 3 (Shepherds)

Luke 2.8-14.

"While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night"

Candle 4 (Wise Men)

Matthew 2.1-12"

"We Three Kings"

Candle 5 (Jesus, Christmas) December 24

Luke 2.15-20.

"Joy to the World"