

## Getting Started

### Introductions

*Set up circle and pocket chart.*

*Introduce Circlekeepers (names and church affiliation), class (state its purpose), and theme of current story series; review last week's story.*

*ID groups; pass out bags with materials; participants make nametags.*

### Attendance

*Take attendance, greet participants, distribute bonus items as appropriate: folders and brochures to first-timers, certificate...four times, book...six times.*

### Explain the Talking Piece

**For some of the activities in Sacred Stories class we use a talking piece.**

**The talking piece creates a space in which everyone can speak and listen in peace.**

**Each person in the circle gets a chance to speak without being interrupted, and to listen without needing to respond.**

**When we are using a talking piece, here is how it works:**

- 1. The talking piece is passed around the circle from person to person.**
- 2. Only the person holding the talking piece may speak.**
- 3. It is always okay to pass; just say, "I pass."**

### Check-In Round

**Today our talking piece is: donkey**

**We will use it for a check-in round; when the talking piece comes to you please...**

- 1. Say your name**
- 2. How familiar you are with this story (new, heard before, could tell)**
- 3. A word or more about how you are feeling today**

**I'll go first...**

### Agreements Round

**These are the four agreements for our time together:**

- 1. Honor the talking piece—when it is being used, speak only when you are holding it**
- 2. Speak from the heart—tell your truth as you are comfortable to share**
- 3. Listen from the heart—be attentive, with a positive spirit; avoid side conversations, comments or questions.**
- 4. Protect personal privacy—Tell about God, Jesus, this class and the story we learn, but keep confidential personal information that is shared**

**Now let us see if we can all accept these agreements: I accept these agreements...**

### Opening: The Presentation and the Story

*Present Journey to Bethlehem for **Week 2 of Advent (Mary)**.*

*Tell **Luke 1:26-38***

## Engaging the Story

**Familiarity**

**Word I Heard**

Listen again to **the story of the Annunciation to Mary**.

This time close your eyes or focus on the candle to help cut out distractions.

As you listen, notice if any word or phrase gets your attention... *Read or tell*

Before you open your eyes, recall a word or phrase that got your attention...

*Ring chime...* Now open your eyes.

For this round, name a word or phrase that you heard in the reading/telling.

**Storyboard → Tell to a Partner**

**Keys Game**

*Review the structure of the story. Explain Keys Game and have them try it.*

**Listen to the Story**

*Read topics on Listen to the Story handout—go around circle and each woman can read a paragraph; use talking piece for easy opt-out.*

**Connections**

*Each person has an opportunity to respond to possible connections between the story and their life experience.*

*Connection topics are named by the Circlekeeper (they are also on the handout).*

- **In this story the angel Gabriel tells Mary she is going to have a baby. So the story might be inviting you to consider a time you found out you were going to have a baby.**
- **In this story, Mary accepts a difficult challenge. So the story might be inviting you to consider a time you faced a difficult challenge.**
- **Tell about any other connection you made with this story.**

## Winding Up

### Prayer Cards

### Collection

*Gather all the items in the Circle and those passed out which need to be returned.*

### Closing

*Standing in the Circle, conclude with prayer and/or song such as “Go Now in Peace.”*