

## Getting Started

### Introductions

*Set up circle and pocket chart.*

*Introduce Circlekeepers, Sacred Stories, and current theme.*

*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 to four-timers, book to six-timers.*

### 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: *shepherd***

**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

*Tell **Luke 2:8-16***

## Engaging the Story

**Familiarity**

**Word I Heard**

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

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**

It's easier to learn a story if you break it down into episodes or parts.

Just like pre-production work in movie-making, we are going to create storyboards for this story to help us learn it.

This story has **four** parts, so divide your paper into **four** sections.

I'll tell the story one episode at a time. Close your eyes or focus on the candle and see what is happening in your mind's eye as I tell the story.

Now open your eyes, and in the first section of your paper draw a picture of what you saw as you listened to the first part of the story.

*Repeat for other parts.*

**Tell to a Partner**

*Instruct participants to pair up with a partner and take turns telling the story to their partner using their storyboard to help remember (no peeking at other side).*

*When both have told what they remember of the story, they check the script and evaluate what they remembered, left out, and/or added in extra.*

*Optional: Partners team up; everyone tell the story once; clap for each telling.*

**Name a Part**

For this round, pick one episode of the story to tell about—the one you found most interesting, meaningful, or that is your favorite illustration. Show us your storyboard if you like.

**About the Story**

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

*Show illustration of shepherds in Everyday Life in Bible Times, pp. 20-21*

## ☐ **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 and posted on a chart.*

- ✦ **The angelic host sang songs of praise to God. Tell about a praise song you like, or about a time you enjoyed music in the Christmas season.**
- ✦ **The angels proclaimed peace on earth. What are your thoughts about the possibility of peace on earth? How do you find peace in your life?**
- ✦ **Maybe you connected to this story in another way. Tell about that.**

## **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.”*