

## 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: *Jesus in the manger from a crèche set***

**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 2:1-7***

## Engaging the Story

**Familiarity**

**Word I Heard**

**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 **three** parts, so divide your paper into **three** 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.*

**About the Story**

**I Wonder**

**Biblical stories invite us to wonder about things.**

**Because they are such old stories about people who lived in a very different culture, we don't understand some things in the stories.**

**Some of us haven't heard many biblical stories and have lots of questions about them.**

**Even if we have heard lots of biblical stories, they still inspire wondering.**

**So... What questions do you have of this story?**

**What does it make you wonder about?**

*Print responses on lined 4x6 index cards.*

*Pass each card around to the person who had the wondering to place in the circle.*

*Do a second round for people to address the question or wondering of their choice.*

## □ **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.*

- ❖ This story sets the birth of Jesus in the context of world events. So the story invites us to think about what was going on in the nation or world when we were born.
- ❖ Mary was betrothed, but not married, when she gave birth to Jesus. So the story might be inviting you to consider someone else you know who was an unwed mother.
- ❖ Mary laid her infant son in a manger. Do you know what your first bed was like? Or your children's?

## **Winding Up**

### **Prayer Cards**

### **Cookies**

### **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."*