

THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

Our virtues help us prepare for Christmas

Needed: A star (*we use an evergreen star*) with one candle at each point of the star.
Six women to take parts, one leader and five others.
Individual candles for sisters to hold so lights can be turned off or dimmed.

OPENING

Christmas is coming, the decorations are out, the shopping is being finished. Let us take a small moment from our busy schedules and reflect on the “true meaning” of this special time.

The “Star of Bethlehem” is one of the most beautiful and meaningful symbols of Christmas. Since the Star is also the emblem of P.E.O., it is fitting to use it as our Christmas message.

The roads to Bethlehem were roads of Faith, Love, Purity, Justice and Truth. Bethlehem is not a dead end; it is a place from which we can move with greater goodwill and deeper faith.

FAITH

Christmas is Faith (*light candle*)

Christmas is a Faith in goodness and kindness. It is Faith in God, in His Son, in our fellow men and ourselves. Many countries use candles as a symbol of Faith at Christmas. The lovely legend of the Christ Child walking abroad to enter our hearts on Christmas Eve came from Ireland. Our candle in the window invites Him to cross the threshold and then lights Him on His way.

The Wise Men followed the Star, and they found the Christ. They were not sure of their destination. But they believed the Star, for them the Star represented God’s guiding hand. And their Faith was rewarded.

Hymn: O Come All Ye Faithful (*one verse*)

LOVE

Christmas is Love (*light candle*)

Love expresses itself in giving, and gifts spring from a loving heart. The Wise Men could not have worshipped Him fully without the giving of gifts. Neither can we. The Love of the shepherds who worshipped at Jesus’ birth was all they had. So, from the beginning of Christian gift-giving, Love has been the most important part of our gift.

Hymn: We Three Kings (*one verse*)

PURITY

Christmas is Purity (*light candle*)

What greater gift could God send us than His infant Son wrapped not only in swaddling clothes, but in Purity and Love.

This Christmas let us not just clean up the house. Let us prepare our hearts. Heart preparation sweeps our lives clear of the cobwebs of indifference, the clutter of despair and failure and the accumulation of sin. Then we can claim Christmas as Christ's Day and He will enter our lives as our dearest Guest.

Hymn: Away in a Manger (*one verse*)

JUSTICE

Christmas is Justice (*light candle*)

Christmas is a prophetic day, looking not so much backward as forward. It belongs to an order not yet attained, to a religion not yet realized; to a coming, but distant time which all prophets have foreseen, when men will be ruled by "the angels of our higher nature," and justice will reign, and pity and joy will walk the common ways of life.

Let us remember the words of the prophet Isaiah: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever."

Hymn: It Came Upon a Midnight Clear (*one verse*)

TRUTH

Christmas is Truth (*light candle*)

When at Christmas we wish our friends a "Merry Christmas", it is important to realize that true merriment of heart depends on our recognition of the Truth that Jesus was born in Bethlehem for our salvation.

"May you know the Truth of Christmas
That Jesus Christ is King,
Both in a lowly manger
Where heavenly angels sing,
And on the throne of God
Where hosannas ever ring."

Hymn: Joy to the World (*verses 1 and 4*)

CLOSING

As we leave Bethlehem, we should leave behind old grudges, old fears, old sorrows. We should continue our adventure of life, praising God and walking on new and better roads. Sometime during the winter months we shall need the friendly spirit of Christmas. Sometime in the spring we shall want the hope of Christmas. Let us not pack up the true spirit of Christmas when we put away the decorations.

At this Christmas season, let us think of the Star of Bethlehem which guided the Wise Men to Jesus that they might worship Him; and may our P.E.O. emblem forever be a reminder of these things.

Hymn: O Little Town of Bethlehem (*one verse*)

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Chapter EO
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