

This can be adapted to your setting as a dramatic reading or play.

THE FIRST CHRISTMAS (a dramatic reading adapted from Las Posadas)

**THE CHRISTMAS STORY
THE ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE SHEPHERDS**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Glorious God, in Jesus your grace appears,
bringing salvation to all.

Help us to ponder your words of love by the light of your Spirit,
that we may proclaim glad tidings of peace
and welcome Christ in our world. Amen.

Luke 2:1-20

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus
that all the world should be registered.

2 This was the first registration
and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

3 All went to their own towns to be registered.

4 Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth
in Galilee to Judea,

to the city of David called Bethlehem,
because he was descended
from the house and family of David.

5 He went to be registered with Mary,
to whom he was engaged
and who was expecting a child.

6 While they were there,
the time came for her to deliver her child.

7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son
and wrapped him in bands of cloth,
and laid him in a manger,

because there was no place for them in the inn.

8 In that region there were shepherds

living in the fields,

keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 Then an angel of the Lord stood before them,

and the glory of the Lord shone around them,

and they were terrified.

10 But the angel said to them,

"Do not be afraid; for see—

I am bringing you good news

of great joy for all the people:

11 to you is born this day

in the city of David a Savior,

who is the Messiah, the Lord.

12 This will be a sign for you:

you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth

and lying in a manger."

13 And suddenly there was with the angel

a multitude of the heavenly host,

praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven,

and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

15 When the angels had left them

and gone into heaven,

the shepherds said to one another,

"Let us go now to Bethlehem

and see this thing that has taken place,

which the Lord has made known to us."

16 So they went with haste

and found Mary and Joseph,

and the child lying in the manger.

17 When they saw this,

they made known what had been told them

about this child;

18 and all who heard it were amazed

at what the shepherds told them.

19 But Mary treasured all these words
and pondered them in her heart.

20 The shepherds returned,
glorifying and praising God
for all they had heard and seen,
as it had been told them. (Luke 21-20 NRSV)

The First Inn

The angels departed from the shepherds in the field. And they looked all at each other in wonder and then finally set out looking for the baby in the manger. But they did not know where to start and Bethlehem, the city of David, was so much bigger than a field. So they decided to start with what would draw people to the city. The census meant that many people would be traveling to it and when people travel, that means they will be staying in the inns of the city.

They came up to one inn and knocked on the door. The innkeeper opened and said, “We have no room!”

They said, “We are not looking for a room. We are looking for the baby who was born this night.”

The innkeeper answered, “We don’t let in strangers. We are afraid of them and only let in those people we do not know. They could hurt us or take our money.”

To that, the shepherds said, “How, then, will the people coming through this town find any rest?”

“We don’t know,” said the innkeeper. “We don’t even rest ourselves.”

The shepherds asked, “Who can calm our fears in this world?”

Then they went on to the next inn.

The Second Inn

There, when they knocked on the door. The innkeeper answered, “What do you want?”

They said, "We are looking for the couple who was expecting a child."

He replied, "Did they have money? I don't let anyone in unless they can pay me what I want."

The shepherds said, "We don't know if they had enough money."

"Then they are probably not here," he said. "We only have the best."

The shepherds went away, in search of the place that would take in the newborn child.

HYMN

The Third Inn

At another inn the innkeeper told them that he had not seen any child.

"Besides," he said, "I have no time for people, they bother me."

The shepherds continued their search but wondered how a man with such resentment was ever going to change.

The Last Inn

The shepherds finally came to an inn and there the innkeeper told them that out back there was a couple who went to the stable and, there, they saw the baby. It had been a long journey and they were tired. There he was with his mother and father. Peace filled the stable. They knew what the angels had told them was true. They understood God's love of which was given to us that day. And they knew that just as they had come to welcome the Christ child, that here was God's sign of welcome to them, to free them, and us, of our fears, and selfishness, and hostility. Here, was the Savior.

by Sigrid Undset:

And when we give each other Christmas gifts in his name, let us remember that he has given us the sun and the moon and the stars, and the earth with all its forests and mountains and oceans -- and all that

lives and moves upon them. He has given us all green things and everything that blossoms and bears fruit -- and all that we quarrel about and all that we have misused -- and to save us from our own foolishness, from all our sins, he came down to earth and gave us himself.

Las Posadas are an important part of Mexican Christmas celebrations. The word *posada* means "inn" or "shelter" in Spanish, and this tradition re-enacts Mary and Joseph's search for a place to stay in Bethlehem. Posadas are held in Mexico on each of the nine nights leading up to Christmas, from December 16 to 24th.

Mary and Joseph's search for shelter in Bethlehem is re-enacted. Participants in the posada make a procession through the streets to the home of the family hosting the posada. They usually carry lit candles or lanterns and sing Christmas carols as they process through the streets of the neighborhood.