

Themes include: journeying, seeking, finding, love, hope, refuge, change, safety, difference, God, Advent, Christmas

Inspired by: passages in the Bible: Isaiah 9: 2-7; Matthew 2: 1-12; Luke 2: 1-20 and John 1: 1-14

Opening Words

Are you ready for a story?

From now on keep your eyes looking down.

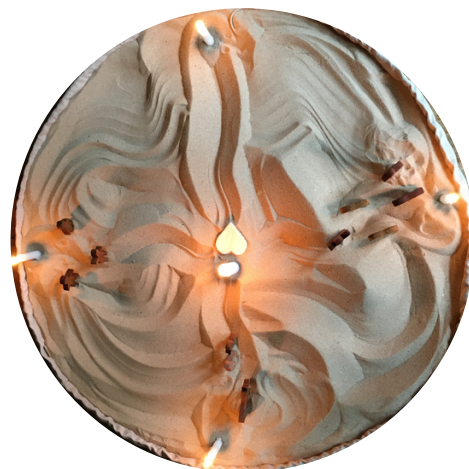
Let's turn this upside down.

Now we have time to breathe.

In a circle of trust we listen and explore feelings.

There's space to wonder and play, in love.

This is a Christian story about Advent. Let's be curious.



Words	Actions (storyteller's perspective)
<p>In Advent, we are getting ready ... waiting for someone special to come ... making room in our hearts ... reaching out in welcome ... hoping to connect.</p>	<p><i>Move the sand into undulations.</i></p>
<p>Throughout Advent we remember the light that shines out in the dark... and the people who journeyed towards it.</p>	<p><i>Place a candle in the centre and light it.</i></p>
<p>Prophets speak out for God. They show us the way of love.</p>	<p><i>Hold the heart in your open palms and place it down in the centre the other side of the candle from you. Make a straight path from 12 o'clock to the centre.</i></p>
<p>The light shines out: hope for a better world.</p>	<p><i>Light a candle from the Christ candle and place it at the start of the path.</i></p>
<p>A couple is coming along a road. Their journey has been long, and they are worn out. The woman's baby is ready to be born. They wonder whether there will be a place to stay.</p>	<p><i>Mark a curvy path from 3 o'clock to the Christ candle and place down two people and a donkey. Move them a short way along. Choose one of the people who can sit on the donkey so that later there is the possibility of playing with putting Mary on the donkey.</i></p>
<p>The light shines out: hope of refuge and safety.</p>	<p><i>Light the candle from the Christ candle and place it at the start of the path.</i></p>
<p>Some workers are travelling another road. They heard music in the darkness: singing about a child who will bring peace to earth; who has come for everyone. Who will they meet? They are full of excitement.</p>	<p><i>Mark a curvy path from 9 o'clock to the centre and place down two people and three sheep. Move them a short way along.</i></p>
<p>The light shines out: hope of change.</p>	<p><i>Light the candle from the Christ candle and place it at the start of the path.</i></p>

Words	Actions (storyteller's perspective)
People from a distant land journey along a different route.	<i>Mark a meandering path from 6 o'clock to the centre and place down three people. Move them a short way along. (It is best to light the candle nearest to you last to avoid setting fire to a sleeve)</i>
They had seen a new star rising. They were curious and now they are following.	
The light shines out: hope of seeking and joy of finding.	<i>Light the candle from the Christ candle and place it at the start of the path.</i>

Please see our training resources or come on an OutoftheBox course to develop in the art of holding a safe and brave space for contemplation, reflection and dialogue.

Wondering

You are now engaging with the group so look up, and say: **Let's be curious about how we feel.**
I wonder what part of this story you like?
I wonder what part you don't like?
I wonder what the story reminds you of?

Community Play .

Facilitate play with the materials to further explore feelings and to focus on an issue or idea, e.g.
How are you feeling? *or* What does your day look like? *or* What does your community look like?
What helps you on your journey towards the light?
What lights do you see shining out in your community?
Where is hope?
Who are the people who are giving / in need of hope?
You may invite people to place themselves in the picture using one of the wooden figures.

Closing Words

Before the story is put away, ask: **Is there anything else that needs to be said or done?**
Hold out your hands as you say: **For all that's been said and for all that's not been said - thank you.**
Invite participants to remove the objects they put down, then put the other objects away in reverse order.

Personal Response

Time to play and contemplate, e.g. in movement, art & craft, writing, playing with the story materials.

Celebration

Share food and drink to allow people to connect socially and prepare to leave the session.

Materials

OutoftheBox can be told anywhere, e.g. sand, cloth, a clearing in leaves. You will need figures representing Mary, Joseph, two shepherds, three sheep, three Magi, a heart shape and candles. You could use stones for the people or nativity figures. OutoftheBox supplies one box of beautiful resources to share all the stories. You can become a member to access the stories and the self led learning resources at www.outoftheboxstories.org