

"Las Posadas"

The Journey to Christ Consciousness

LESSON INTENTION

To understand that matter what our religious beliefs are, we are all searching for the light of the Christ.

History

Christmas festivities begin with Las Posadas, nine consecutive days of candlelight processions and lively parties starting December 16.

In villages and urban neighborhoods throughout Mexico youngsters gather each afternoon to reenact the holy family's quest for lodging in Bethlehem. The procession is headed by a diminutive Virgen María, often perched on a live burro, led by an equally tiny San José. They are followed by other children portraying angels, the Santos Reyes (Three Kings), and a host of pastores y pastoras (shepherds and shepherdesses), all usually decked out in colorful handmade costumes and carrying brightly decorated báculos (walking staffs) or faroles (paper lanterns).

The parade of Santos Peregrinos (Holy Pilgrims) stops at a designated house to sing a traditional litany by which the Holy Family requests shelter for the night and those waiting behind the closed door turn them away. They proceed to a second home where the scene is repeated. At the third stop the pilgrims are told that while there is no room in the posada (inn), they are welcome to take refuge in the stable. The doors are flung open and all are invited to enter.

This is an active way of teaching children the story of the Nativity, but the chief attraction is the merrymaking that follows, above all the chance to engage in the ruthless smashing of piñatas and a mad scramble for the shower of fruits, sugar cane, peanuts and candies released from within.

The Celebration

LAS POSADAS

Characters

Narrator

Mary

Joseph

A group of singers who follow Mary & Joseph

3 Innkeepers

Props

3 candles

Blue head scarf for Mary

Tan head scarf for Joseph & Innkeepers

Flashlights for singers

Empty crèche or basket

Spanish Christmas Music

Set

3 Doorways with doors. **#1 – Door to the supply room**
 #2 – Door to the outside stairs
 #3 – Door to the Prayer chapel

There is one innkeeper behind each door before the play begins. There is also a piñta hanging in the Sacred Space area.

Action

Narrator:

People all across the lands were searching for "light" and meaning in their world. The people of Mexico had heard stories about the bright star in the sky and of the Holy Family's journey. The story of that journey and the birth of Jesus so captivated them, that they built a tradition around the story itself. The people of Mexico call their celebration "Las Posadas."

Each year the story is re-enacted by the people in their local communities. People go from house to house just as the blessed family went from inn to inn. Each step of the way is lit by the soft glow of a candle or lamp. The lamp lights their way just as the star lit the way for Mary and Joseph so long ago.

Action:

The Holy Family enters followed by a few "singers." Some are carrying the empty basket (crèche) and the rest are carrying lit candles or flashlights. They come to the FIRST door and Joseph knocks on it. The innkeeper opens the door a crack and peeks out.

Joseph: My name is Joseph and this is my wife Maria. She is the Queen of Heaven and the mother-to-be of the Divine Savior. Please let us come in.

1st Innkeeper: If she is a queen, what is she doing out at this time of night?

Action: After delivering his line the first innkeeper slams the door. The Holy Family followed by the singers proceeds to the second door in the same manner but this time, the second innkeeper does not open the door.

Joseph: In the name of heaven, please let us in. My beloved wife is very tired and can walk no more.

2nd Innkeeper: (*Shouts through the door.*) This is not an inn. Go away! We will not open the door. You may be a thief!

Action: The Holy Family now proceeds to the third door.

Joseph: I am Joseph and my wife Maria is about to give birth to the King of heaven and earth. Please let us come in.

3rd Innkeeper: We did not recognize you! Please come in Blessed Pilgrims. All we have to offer is this humble little corner but we offer it from the bottom of our hearts!

Action: As he speaks his lines, the innkeeper is holding his lit candle and lets them in. They bow to each other in appreciation. The Holy Family is shown to the "comfortable corner" which can be center stage, where they sit on comfortable pillows. The Innkeeper then hands Mary and Joseph each a candle and he lights them from his own.

3rd Innkeeper: (*As he lights their candles*) The light of God is with you!

Joseph & Mary: And also with you.

Action: Actors bow to one another and then to the audience.

Discussion

- ♥ Why do you think the first two innkeepers would not let them in?
- ♥ What could the 3rd Innkeeper have meant when he said he did not recognize them?
- ♥ What does the Christ represent to us?
- ♥ What happens to us when we invite the "Holy Family" into our lives?
- ♥ What happens when we are afraid to let them in?
- ♥ What is this story really about?

Piñta

Materials: Bull or donkey Piñta filled with candy and small toys, stick to break it & a blindfold.

Fill the Piñata with candy and small toys and seal it up. Suspend it from the ceiling. Give each child a chance to break it open by blindfolding them and they give each one a whack at it.

Make sure they share the candy and toys.

Creative Expression

Beeswax Candles

Materials: Beeswax, wicks or candle making kit

Invite each of the children to create their own candle to represent the light within.

For younger children:

Materials: Construction paper - candles, holders, flames and blank sheets; glue sticks; pipe cleaners; craft sticks; etc...

Assist the children in creating their own paper candle stick.

Food

Champurrado (Chocolate Atole)

6 cups whole milk
1 cup masa harina--corn flour
2 cups water
1 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
3 oz. unsweetened chocolate, grated
1 cinnamon stick

Heat the milk and chocolate in a saucepan, stirring to dissolve the chocolate. When chocolate is completely dissolved, remove from the heat and set aside to keep warm. Mix the masa harina with the water in another saucepan; place over low heat, add the cinnamon stick, and cook until the mixture has thickened and the masa becomes translucent. Add the chocolate milk and sugar. Stir to dissolve the sugar and simmer for a few minutes. Remove the cinnamon stick and serve the champurrado hot in cups or mugs.