20

The Star
Shows the Way to Bethlehem
(adjusted from The Magi to The Star)
Matthew 1-2; Luke 1-2

*Go to the liturgical shelf and bring the materials for **Advent** to the circle. Roll out the felt road in front of you. At the end of the road, to your left, place the square mat, white side up. Put the model of Bethlehem (without the star on it.) Then place the rolled purple underlay below the road to your far right, so that it will unroll to your left. Sit quietly while you feel the story forming in you. Then say:*

> This is the season of Advent, the time we get ready to celebrate the mystery of Christmas, the time we are *all* on the way to Bethlehem.

Point toward Bethlehem.

> But who will show us the way?

Run your hand over the road to Bethlehem. Then unroll the purple underlay to expose the first space.

> The prophets.

Present the first card and say:

> Prophets listen to God. So, they can show us the way.

Place the card on the underlay. Then present the figure of Isaiah and say:

> Isaiah was a prophet who listed and spoke the word of God.

Place Isaiah on the road in front of the card.

> He said one day the Messiah would be born. The Messiah would be like a light shining in darkness. This is what Isaiah said: “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.”

Place a purple candle between you and the card.

> This is the candle of the prophets. It reminds us that prophets like Isaiah listen to God, so they can show us the way to Bethlehem.

Light the candle.

> Let us enjoy the light of the prophets.

After an appropriate time for meditating, move Isaiah ahead two sections. Unroll the second section of the underlay. Present the second card and say:

> Mary and Joseph are on the way to Bethlehem. They can show us the way. They have a secret. An angel came to them and said, “Do not be afraid. Be joyful. You will have God’s special Son. You will name him Jesus.”

Place the card on the underlay. Then turn to the Nativity set on the shelf behind you and take Mary and say:

> Here is Mary...

Place Mary on the road in front of the card. Then present and place Joseph.

> ...and Joseph...

Present and place the donkey.

> ...and the donkey, who are on the way to Bethlehem, where Jesus will be born.

Take a second purple candle and place it between you and the second card as you say:

> This is the candle of the Holy Family. It reminds us not to be afraid, but to be joyful on the way to Bethlehem.

Light the candle.

> Let us enjoy the light of the Holy Family.

After an appropriate time for meditating, move Isaiah ahead two sections, and then the Holy Family, so the third section is clear. Unroll the third section of the underlay. Present the third card and say:

> The shepherds are on the way to Bethlehem. They can show us the way. They have good news too. An angel came to them and said, "Do not be afraid. Be joyful. Today a Savior, God's special Son, is born in Bethlehem. You will find him lying in a manger."

Turn to the Nativity set on the shelf behind you and get the shepherds and sheep, one at a time, and place them on the road in front of the third card as you say:

> Here are the shepherds...and their sheep...who are on the way to Bethlehem to see the special child who was born.

Place a purple candle (or a rose candle, if this is your church's practice) between you and the third card and say:

> This is the candle of the shepherds. It reminds us of the good news: a Savior, the special Son of God, is born.

Light the candle.

> Let us enjoy the light of the shepherds.

After an appropriate time for meditating, move Isaiah and the Holy Family to the Bethlehem square, and the shepherds to the end of the road. Unroll the fourth section of the purple underlay. Present the fourth card and say:

A Star can show us the way. The heavens declare the glory of God.

Present and place the Star in its stand on the road.

The Star invites us to follow the prophets,
Mary and Joseph, and the shepherds to Bethlehem.

Place a purple candle between you and the fourth card as you say:

This is the candle of the Star. It reminds us of how the heavens declare the glory of God.

Light the candle.

Let us enjoy the light of the Star.

After an appropriate time for meditating, take the candle snuffer and say:

Now I will change the lights.

Snuff the first candle flame very slowly, catching the smoke in the snuffer cup and then releasing it. Watch the smoke wind upward into the room and disappear as you say:

The light of the prophets...

Snuff the second candle.

...and the light of the Holy Family...

Snuff the third candle.

...and the light of the shepherds...

Snuff the fourth candle.

> ...and the light of the Star... can be with us always in many ways and many places, all through the year.

Responding to God's Word: Wondering together

I wonder how it feels to see a special star?...

I wonder how you know it is a *special* star if others just saw a star?...

I wonder how the heavens declare the glory of God?...

I wonder how we know who to follow as they show the way?...

Return to the weekly worship center order and continue. The scripture reading is Matthew 2:1-2.