STORY WITH CHILDREN AT CHRISTMAS

Manger

Invite the children to meet you at the front of the church. If it is possible have this space set up like a living room. Take a seat in a comfortable armchair set beside a lit Christmas tree. On the other side of the armchair have a side table with a teapot filled with soft sand sitting on it. Out of sight, but within arm’s reach have a nativity set which includes Mary, Joseph, Jesus in a manger, shepherds, sheep, barn animals and the magi ready to use during the story.

Invite the children to sit in front of you. Begin by talking about how this is a night to sit around the Christmas tree as a family and re-tell the Christmas story. You may wish to say that this is what your family likes to do every Christmas Eve. Move the side table in front of you and pick up the teapot and begin to pour the sand out onto the tabletop as you tell the children that this is a story that happened a long time ago in a land much warmer than Canada. The story happened to a young couple who had to travel from their home in Nazareth to a town far away named Bethlehem. Their names were Mary and Joseph.

Tell the story of the birth of Jesus simply and gently in your own words. Don’t stop and start the story to explain things, just tell the story without explanation or interpretation.

As you introduce each of the people or animals in the story, move the appropriate figure on to your bed of sand. You may also wish to move them about the scene as the story requires. The figures are not there to distract the children from the story but to offer visual moments for awe and wonder. Take your time moving the figures gently and smoothly. This may actually take some practice ahead of time to get comfortable with telling the story and moving characters through the sand.

When you have completed the story don’t feel the need to add a moral message to the story. Simply thank God for story. You may wish to invite the children to return to their seats or stay at the front for the rest of the service according to your tradition.