

ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH Worksheet

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Verse 1

Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains,
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain

Gloria, in excelsis Deo!
Gloria, in excelsis Deo!

Verse 2

Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heavenly song?

Refrain

Verse 3

Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing;
Come, adore on bended knee,
Christ the Lord, the newborn King.

Refrain

Verse 4

See Him in a manger laid,
Whom the choirs of angels praise;
Mary, Joseph, lend your aid,
While our hearts in love we raise.

Refrain

An alternate translation, by George Ratcliffe Woodward (1848-1934):

Shepherds in the field abiding,
Tell us when the seraph bright
Greeted you with wondrous tidings,
What you saw and heard that night.

Refrain

We beheld-it is no fable-
God incarnate, King of bliss,
Swathed and cradled in a stable,
And the angel strain was this:

Refrain

Choristers on high were singing
Jesus and His virgin birth,
Heavenly bells the while a-ringing
"Peace, good will to men on earth."

Refrain

Vocabulary In one or two words define the following terms from the poem.

Verse 1: o'er, plains, strains

Refrain: Gloria, excelsis, Deo

Verse 2: jubilee, prolong, gladsome, tidings, inspire

Verse 3: adore

Verse 4: manger

Word Pictures Word pictures is another way of saying *imagery*. *Imagery* or *figurative language* helps us form a picture of what the author is trying to present. Discuss what these word pictures mean and, perhaps, draw your idea of the *imagery* or *figurative language* the author uses!

Verse 1: Angels we have heard on high; Sweetly singing o'er the plains; mountains in reply

Verse 2: shepherds ... jubilee; gladsome tidings; heavenly song

Verse 3: angels sing, adore on bended knee, newborn King

Verse 4: choirs of angels

Mechanics are the nuts and bolts of a poem. Verbally discuss.

Who is the speaker? (Does the speaker have a specific personality or has the author remained in the background so the message of the poem will be more clear?)

What does the poem reveal about the speaker's character? (Sometimes, poems reveal nothing about the speaker's personal thoughts, feelings, or attitudes. Yet, the poem may demonstrate those character traits that are important to the author like courage, loyalty, perseverance, etc.)

Is the speaker addressing someone in particular or is it to anyone? (Sometimes poems are not directed to anyone in particular, but to anyone that may read it.)

Does the poem have a setting? (Does the author tell where the poem occurs? Is the poem about a specific event?)

Is the poem about a particular event? (Is the event past or present? If it is about a past event, does the remembrance of the event have a particular meaning to the speaker?)

Is the theme of the poem stated directly or indirectly? (Some poems are straightforward and are meant to be taken literally. In songs, the theme may be presented in the refrain or in the last few lines. Sometimes the theme is a little bit more difficult to discern as it is made with figurative language or symbols.)

What point of view or perspective is the speaker? (What meaning do you think the poem has for the author?)

How did you respond to the poem when you read it the first time? (Did your thoughts and feelings change after you took time to study it?)

Comprehension Questions Verbally discuss

Verse 1: What has been heard? How did the mountains reply?

Refrain: Explain and Discuss: “Gloria, in excelsis Deo!”

Verse 2: What are the shepherds doing? What event is being sung about?

Verse 3: What is the importance of Bethlehem? What are the angels singing about? What does the author say you should do? Why?

Verse 4: Where is this King to be found in this verse? Where is He now? Explain: “choirs of angels.” What is the significance of Joseph and Mary and why do they need to lend aid?

Review the gospel accounts of this historic event.

After reading this poem, what character traits did you think of? What does the Bible have to say about these character traits?

What Does the Bible Say?

Find Scripture proofs for each of the assertions or statements made for each of the four verses and the refrain.

Review the gospel accounts and Isaiah 53.

The Author/Poet

Based on what you have studied about this poem so far, would you guess that the author was a Christian or a humanist? How did you arrive at your decision?

This is a traditional French carol (Les Anges dans nos Campagnes). James Chadwick (1813-1882) translated it from French to English.

Geography

Locate on a France and Bethlehem globe, map and atlas.

Challenge Locate two rivers in France on a map or in an atlas.

Compare/contrast the weather from France with your own for one week.

Make a French meal for your family.

Activities

1) Make your own book! Without making an image of Christ, draw pictures representing each verse. (Note: that will be four different illustrations). With construction paper and other items readily available at home, make a title page with the name of the song and the author’s name which will be your book’s cover. You may want to illustrate your cover and include this poem in your book.

2) Make your own play! Re-enact with your siblings or friends the event or message discussed in this poem. Keep it lively, simple, and short. You may want to end your play with singing a rousing chorus of this poem or reading Scripture verses. Videotape your creation.

3) Radio Drama! With a handheld tape recorder, create your own radio show dramatizing the historical event of this poem.

4) Be a Reporter! Either with your family camcorder or with a handheld tape recorder, “interview” various individuals connected with this poem (e.g., angels, heads of nations either current / past, the serpent, Joseph, Mary, shepherds, Wise Men, repentant sinner, etc.). In order to have the fast paced style of a reporter, watch and/or listen to the news with your parents’ permission. Keep the interviews lively, quick, and to the point.

Remain objective! Being objective means just reporting the facts and not giving your opinion of the situation.

5) What is one of the things you most enjoy? Is it literature? math? science? sports? cooking? Take that area of interest and relate that to this poem. If you enjoy dance, for example, develop a dance routine that physically expresses the sentiments of this poem. If you enjoy shop, create something out of wood that helps to clarify this poem. Do you enjoy creating stories? Write a story based on any time period you desire that expresses the sentiments of this poem. Do you enjoy creating things in the kitchen? Make an ancient meal from this time or develop your own meal that symbolizes the many different points this poem makes.

6) Poster. Create a poster illustrating the the author’s view of the impact of *Angels We Have Heard On High*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about this traditional French carol and James Chadwick (1813-1882) and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.