

COVENTRY CAROL Worksheet
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Lully, lullay, Thou little tiny Child,
By, by, lully, lullay.

Verse 1

O sisters too, how may we do,
For to preserve this day
This poor Youngling for Whom we sing
By, by, lully, lullay?

Verse 2

Herod the king, in his raging,
Charged he hath this day
His men of might, in his own sight,
All young children to slay.

Verse 3

That woe is me, poor Child for Thee!
And ever morn and day
For Thy parting neither say nor sing,
By, by, lully, lullay.

Lully, lullay, Thou little tiny Child,
By, by, lully, lullay.

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

Verse 1: youngling

Verse 2: hath, slay

Verse 3: woe, morn, Thy, Thee

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: O sisters ... preserve this day

Verse 2: Herod ... in his raging

Verse 3: morn or day

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 historical event is being sung about? Why do you think Youngling and Whom is capitalized?

Verse 2: Who is Herod? Why is he raging? Did you notice the use of the term “hath”? Who do you think the “men of might” are? What were they charged to do?

Verse 3: Did you notice the terms Thy and Thee? Did you notice the old phrase “woe is me”? Why is there woe? Explain and discuss: “For Thy parting neither say nor sing.”

Did this historical event become more real to you after reading this poem? Why?

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 three verses and the refrain.

How does the Bible describe Herod and his deeds? Can you find evidence that this deed would be committed in the older testament?

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 Renaissance carol is named after the city of Coventry, England, where a 1400s pageant re-enacts Herod’s slaughter of the innocents. (Matthew 2:16)

Geography

Locate England on a globe, map and atlas.

Challenge Locate Coventry on a map or in an atlas.

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

Make an English 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 three 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., Herod's soldiers, Herod, Joseph, Mary, 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 *Coventry Carol*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about John Needham and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.