

## GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN Worksheet

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### *Refrain*

Go, tell it on the mountain,  
Over the hills and everywhere  
Go, tell it on the mountain,  
That Jesus Christ is born.

### *Verse 1*

While shepherds kept their watching  
Over silent flocks by night  
Behold throughout the heavens  
There shone a holy light.

### *Refrain*

### *Verse 2*

The shepherds feared and trembled,  
When lo! above the earth,  
Rang out the angels chorus  
That hailed the Savior's birth.

### *Refrain*

### *Verse 3*

Down in a lowly manger  
The humble Christ was born  
And God sent us salvation  
That blessed Christmas morn.

### *Refrain*

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

*Verse 1:* flocks, behold, shone

*Verse 2:* lo, hailed

*Verse 3:* lowly, manger, humble, salvation

**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!

*Refrain:* tell it on the mountain

*Verse 1:* shepherds watching ... silent flocks by night; shone a holy light

*Verse 2:* shepherds feared; angel chorus hailed

**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

*Refrain:* What are we to tell? Where are we to tell it? Why?

*Verse 1:* What were the shepherds doing? What happened?

*Verse 2:* How did the shepherds respond? What did the shepherds witness? What was the angel chorus doing? What was hailed?

*Verse 3:* Why is the manger described as lowly? Explain and discuss lines 2 and 3 of this verse. Why is it a “blessèd Christmas morn”?

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.

Re-read the Gospel accounts of the Nativity along with 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?

The name of the preserver of this poem or lyric is John Wesley Work, Jr. (1872-1925). He was born 6 August 1872, Nashville, Tennessee, and died 7 September 7, 1925, Nashville, Tennessee. He graduated from Fisk University (A.B. 1895, M.A. 1898) teaching Latin and Greek. Work collected, performed and preserved folk music. This piece was first published in *Folk Songs of the American Negro* (Nashville, Tennessee: 1907).

## Geography

Locate Tennessee on a globe, map and atlas.

*Challenge* Locate Nashville on a map or in an atlas.

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

Make a traditional southern 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 or message 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., mountains, angels, shepherds, Joseph, Mary, sheep, repentant sinner, manger, 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 *Go Tell It on the Mountain*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about John Wesley Work, Jr. (1872-1925) and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.