

## **O HOLY NIGHT Worksheet**

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### *Verse 1*

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining;  
It is the night of the dear Savior's birth!  
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,  
Till He appeared and the soul felt its worth.  
A thrill of hope, the weary soul rejoices,  
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn.

### *Refrain*

Fall on your knees, O hear the angel voices!  
O night divine, O night when Christ was born!  
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

### *Verse 2*

Led by the light of faith serenely beaming,  
With glowing hearts by His cradle we stand.  
So led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,  
Here came the wise men from Orient land.  
The King of kings lay thus in lowly manger,  
In all our trials born to be our Friend!

### *Refrain*

### *Verse 3*

Truly He taught us to love one another;  
His law is love and His gospel is peace.  
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother  
And in His Name all oppression shall cease.  
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,  
Let all within us praise His holy Name!

### *Refrain*

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

*Verse 1:* Saviour, sin, error, pining, weary, soul, rejoices, yonder

*Refrain:* divine, holy

*Verse 2:* serenely, lowly, trials

*Verse 3:* truly, gospel, oppression, cease, hymns, praise

**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:* stars are brightly shining; Long lay the world in sin and error pining; soul felt its worth; thrill of hope; weary soul rejoices; yonder breaks ... glorious morn

*Refrain:* Fall on your knees; hear the angel voices; O night divine

*Verse 2:* light of faith; glowing hearts; light of a star; wise men from Orient land

*Verse 3:* chains shall ... break; all oppression shall cease

**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:* Why do you think the author describes the night as "holy"? Explain and discuss: "Long lay the world in sin and error pining" relating same to the Fall in the Garden of Eden. What does "the soul felt its worth" mean? Why would the soul only feel its worth when He appeared? Why do you think the age-old (deceptive?) concept of self-esteem would fall apart in light of this particular birth? Why would the "weary soul" rejoice? What breaks and why would it be "glorious"?

*Refrain:* Why, according to the author, should we fall on our knees? Do you agree/disagree with the author? Why? What is heard? Explain and discuss: "O holy night, O night divine!"

*Verse 2:* What is meant by the "light of faith serenely beaming"? By what are we "standing"? Why would that be important? What led us that "sweetly" gleams? Tell about "the wise men from Orient land." Why do you think the author included this reference in the poem? What does the phrase "King of kings" mean? Explain and discuss: "In all our trials born to be our Friend!"

*Verse 3:* The author uses the term “love” in the first line of this verse. How does the Bible define love? How does “common courtesy” come into play with this concept? Why would a slave be our brother [sister]? What are they enslaved to? Relate “And in His Name all oppression shall cease” to the admonition of Christ to “occupy till I come.” Now relate same to 2 Corinthians 10:5 and Matthew 28:19,20. Explain and discuss: “Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we, Let all within us praise His holy Name!” Why do you think the author included same within the poem?

Did this historical event or message 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.

For Scriptural help in defining the word “love,” please refer to the internet web page ...

<http://www.lovetolearnplace.com/SpecialDays/Valentines/Bible.html>

### **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 author for this poem or lyric is Placide Clappeau, a wine merchant and mayor of Roquemaure, France. It would appear Clappeau wrote the poem in 1847. John S. Dwight (1812-1893) translated the poem to English From French. This son of Timothy Dwight was born 13 May 1812, Boston, Massachusetts. He was educated at Harvard and Cambridge Theological College.

### **Geography**

Locate France, Boston, and Massachusetts on a globe, map and atlas.

*Challenge* Locate Roquemaure (France) on a map or in an atlas.

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

Make a French and/or American 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 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., John Knox, Lady Rebecca (aka Pocohontas), John Smith, John Witherspoon, repentant sinner, Paul, Cortez, 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 *O Holy Night*.

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about Placide Clappeau and John S. Dwight (1812-1893) and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.