

WHAT CHILD IS THIS? Worksheet

© 2002 Beverly Schmitt, all rights reserved

Verse 1

What Child is this who, laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

Verse 2

Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christians, fear, for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through,
The cross be borne for me, for you.
Hail, hail the Word made flesh,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

Verse 3

So bring Him incense, gold and myrrh,
Come peasant, king to own Him;
The King of kings salvation brings,
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.
Raise, raise a song on high,
The virgin sings her lullaby.
Joy, joy for Christ is born,
The Babe, the Son of Mary.

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

Verse 1: anthems, watch, haste, laud

Verse 2: mean, estate, pleading, pierce, borne, hail

Verse 3: incense, myrrh, peasant, salvation, enthrone, lullaby

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, without making an image of Christ, draw your idea of the *imagery* or *figurative language* the author uses!

Verse 1: angels greet; anthems sweet; shepherds guard and angels sing

Verse 2: mean estate; The cross be borne

Verse 3: song on high; virgin sings her lullaby

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: Who is laid to rest? What is Mary doing? What are the angels doing? The shepherds are performing what service? Explain and discuss: “Haste, haste, to bring Him laud.” According to the author, we should hurry to bring praise? Why? Who is this praise to be brought to? (*Hint: Last line*)

Verse 2: What is meant by “mean estate”? Who are feeding? Why should Christians fear? Explain and discuss: “Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, The cross be borne for me, for you.” Why do you think the author mentions this event at Christmas time and not at Easter? Explain: “Hail, hail the Word made flesh.” What exactly does this mean? Give Scriptural support.

Verse 3: What is to be brought? (*Hint: First line*) Why do you think the author has a “peasant” and a “king” come to this Person? Explain and discuss: “The King of kings salvation brings, Let loving hearts enthrone Him.” Why do you think the author included that phrase in this poem? What should be raised on high? Who sings a lullaby?

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.

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 author for this poem or lyric is William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898). He was born 14 June 1837, Bristol, England, and died 9 September 1898, Cheddar, Somerset, England. Dix's surgeon father wrote a biography on Thomas Chatterton where William received his middle name. William managed a marine insurance company in Glasgow, Scotland, and wrote over 40 hymns.

This poem was first published in *The Manger Throne*, 1865, and was set to the 16th century tune entitled *Greensleeves*.

Geography

Locate England and Scotland on a globe, map and atlas.

Challenge Locate Bristol, Cheddar, and Somerset (England) on a map or in an atlas.

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

Make a England and/or Scottish 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., Sir Francis Walsingham, Sir Francis Drake, Lady Rebecca (aka Pocohontas), G.A. Henty, J.R.R. Tolkien, 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 *What Child is This?*

7) Scavenger Hunt. Go to the library to learn what you can about William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898) and share it with your family. If possible, discover the story behind this poem.