Posters with “Shepherds” (Let’s go see!); “Wise Ones” (Look, a star!); “Angel” (“Hallelujah)

A is for ANGEL. The ANGEL Gabriel began the story by telling Mary,

Luke 1:28-33        “Good morning! You’re beautiful with God’s beauty.  Beautiful inside and out! God be with you…. Mary, you have nothing to fear.  God has a surprise for you: You will become pregnant and give birth to a son and call his name Jesus.”

B is for Bethlehem, where our story takes place.  People traveled from far and wide to get to Bethlehem, which was not a very big village.

C is for Census, which means an official counting of all the people.  The reason so many people came to Bethlehem.

D is for David, who was an ancestor of Joseph. Luke 1:32 says, “Jesus will be a great person and God will give him the throne of David.” David was a great King, Jesus is the Messiah!

E is for Exhausted.  That’s how everyone must have felt when they arrived.  It would take about 36 hours of walking to go that far.  That’s three days in a row of doing nothing but walking.

**Song: O Little Town of Bethlehem (230)**

F is for Family.  Mary and Joseph and their new baby Jesus created a new family, one that would bless the whole world.

*Luke 2:6-8       “While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.”*

G is for the Good News about to be shared with all the earth.  This is what the ANGELS said:

*Luke 2:10-14   “Nearby SHEPHERDS were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. The Lord’s ANGEL stood before them, the Lord’s glory shone around them, and they were terrified. The ANGEL said, “Don’t be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you – wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David’s city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a huge angelic choir was with the ANGEL praising God. They said, “Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace to all people.”*

**Song: Hark the Herald Angels Sing (240)**

H is for Hope.  Now we light the Advent candle of Hope.  Hope is knowing that good news is coming, even when things look gloomy.  Jesus is the source of our hope.

I is for Imagine.  If we close our eyes and imagine the scene, we can see the beauty and wonder of the ANGELS proclaiming good news to all men and women.  We can see the SHEPHERDS, first terrified, but then overcome with joy as they hear the good news.  The SHEPHERDS said

*Let’s go right now to Bethlehem and see what’s happened. Let’s confirm what the Lord has revealed to us.” They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.*

J is for Joy.  Now we light the Advent candle of Joy.  Joy is a kind of happiness that comes from God.  It cannot be dampened, and is always shared.  The birth of Jesus gives us joy.

**Song: Joy to the World (246)**

K is for King.  Though Jesus would be King, he was not the kind of King people were used to.  Most kings are born in palaces, surrounded by servants.  He was born in a stable, surrounded by dirty, smelly SHEPHERDS.  Most kings rule with power and fear.  Jesus rules with mercy and love.

L is for Love.  Now we light the Advent candle of Love, Jesus summarized his ministry by saying “Love God…” and “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

M is for Manger.  A manger is usually used to hold food for animals, but this time it held the baby because he had no crib.

**Song: Away in a Manger ( 217)**

N is for Noel.  Noel is another word for Christmas.  It means new birth, and that’s what happened in our story.  That’s what happens every year at Christmas time.  That’s what happens every time we decide to follow Jesus – he is born anew in us.

O is for Offering.  The WISE ONES gave gifts to the baby, and we can offer our gifts every day.  We give our time, our talents, and our treasure to God, and pray that as a Church, we are good stewards of all that is entrusted to us.  So we share our gifts now.

**Offertory – The First Noel (245, verses 1 & 5)**

P is for Prayer. Let us Pray…

P is for Peace.  Now we light the Advent candle of peace.  Jesus is the Prince of Peace, and is the source of the kind of peace that is true even if we don’t understand it.

Q is for Quiet.  We begin a time of prayer in quiet, allowing God to speak to us, and joyful when the quiet is broken by small voices.

R is for Revealed.  Revealed means “showing us something that was once hidden.” God revealed to us what love looks like by giving us Jesus.  Jesus is love, and reveals to us the way to love one another.

S is for Star.  One special star guided WISE ONES to come to see the baby.  They were mysterious, and they lived far away, but they brought gifts to Jesus because they knew that he would grow up to be a King.

*Matthew 2:9-11 When they heard the king, they went; and look, the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stood over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were filled with joy. 11 They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

T is for Teacher. As Jesus grew up he was a great teacher. We are still learning from him today!

U is for Us. We come together on this special night as we wait for the birth of Jesus with our friends and family because Jesus loves each one of us!

V is for Visitors. Many visitors came to see Jesus, like the SHEPHERDS and WISE ONES.

W is for Wonder.  Like the WISE ONES, we stand in awe and wonder of the newborn King.

X is for Christ.  X is the Greek letter Chi, the first letter in the word “Christ.”  The X is one of the most ancient symbols of Christianity.  People have been using the letter X to stand for Christ for centuries.  And now we light the Christ candle, symbolizing the coming of light into the world.  Jesus is born.

Y is for You.  You ANGELS.  You WISE ONES.  You SHEPHERDS.  You sons and daughters. You mothers and fathers.  You friends and guests.  You are all here to worship and celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Z is for Zeal.  Let your zeal for Christ burn brightly.  As these lights are passed out, know that the light of God burns much, much brighter.  Though these lights will die out, the light of God is steadfast, and endures forever.

(Take out glow sticks and “break” them as we sing together “Silent Night”)

**Song: Silent Night (239 – verses 1 & 4)**

**Closing Blessing to the Happy Birthday Jesus Party**